THE NEW VISION IN THE GERMAN ARTS

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BY

HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER

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TO MY WIFE

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H. G. S.

FOREWORD

STRANGE things result when revolutions are undertaken by a nation of ideologists. It was for this reason inevitable that the phenomena that attended the dynastic, political, social and economic revolution in Germany should be accompanied by an intellectual and, deriving from this, an æsthetic revolution. A backward glance along historical perspectives will make clear this peculiar predilection of the Teutonic spirit for change that promises improvement—or sometimes only change.

A recrudescence of the same tremendous, world-changing forces which brought about the Reformation in Germany, then the disintegration or permeation of older philosophies by modern German thinkers, the new world-gospel of Socialism, the challenge of Nietzsche and the social-economic reconciliation between monarchism, great proletarian masses, capitalism and an age of machines, as embodied in Germany's labor legislation, became operative the very moment when the German mind, released from the ma-

terial-military struggle, saw the light of an idea or an ideal, even an amorphous one, emerging out of the dusky insanity of the war.

Then it was that the German spirit, in a new mysticism that was only a resurging of the old, went rapt and metaphysically to work in the attempt to find new forms for a new civilization. The younger intellectuals, especially those of a radical hue, seemed haunted by the hypnotic phrases of the foreign propagandists who had promised a New Dispensation to Humanity, and had even promised it by the peculiar agency of a war. While disdaining the idea of saving a civilization which had just been so dreadfully engaged in proving its worthlessness, they burned to reconstruct a new civilization out of the old. The poet, painter, architect, playwright and play-producer sought new forms and strove diligently to demolish the old. The old forms and vessels were filled only scantily with the residue of precious essences, but prolifically with poisons and dross—and the vessels must be broken, or remodeled or refilled.

Thus ensued a wild, passionate groping for these new forms—to be flooded with the new spirit and to be given an authentic life and voice. Much ecstatic violence was apparent in the proph-

ets of the new movement. Solvents and explosives became necessary, for the old forms were stubborn, petrified, deep-rooted. Much that was extravagant, bizarre, and even monstrous was born of these convulsions. Then out of the chaos there came a kind of chemical metabolism of forces and values, and the creed, or the emotion, or even the instinct of Expressionism was born.

The term means little and may be applied to the work of some of the ancient as well as to some of the later classics, as it is applied to the most abstract and extreme modern anarchists of art. But it is a term which gathers within its wide categorical arms all the new impulses, discoveries and experiments in art which have originated or been developed in Germany of late years. It would, however, be a fallacy to affirm or assume that these new forms and values were merely the fruit of the upheaval which has taken place in Central Europe. In many instances they are but the extension or application of movements or cults already under way before the war—Cubism, Futurism, and the like. The Germans, goaded, perhaps inspired, by the false dawnlight of the Revolution, and the black peace, sought to bring about, in accordance with their national genius, a system and a synthesis of these new elements.

It is in this sign and in this light that the experiments—the tentative as well as the successful —which are described in the pages of this book, must be appraised—in so far as they deal with the New Movements and the New Period. To deny their significance and vitality, or to imagine that they can be put aside with a gesture or annulled with phrases still surviving from the vocabulary of the war, is to be blind to manifestations which have begun to invade the whole structure of art, deaf to a new music and inaccessible to a new force which is already operating as a powerful leaven in the dough of the bread of art which we and our children shall eat.

This book does not pretend to cover the whole field of these new æsthetic phenomena, nor to establish their relations to similar or related phenomena elsewhere. A few of the essays in this collection, such as "A Candidate for Immortality," "The Laughing Synthesis," and "The Organization of the Spirit," have indeed, no direct bearing upon the revolt in art. Yet they are akin to it in spirit and in effect. For we must not forget that the New, whenever, wherever or by whomever discovered or revealed, always comes clad with that strange and at first alienating power which invests all things and thoughts that

grow out of the Existing, yet challenge or supersede it by virtue of the life and the fertility they bear within them.

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THE NEW VISION IN THE GERMAN ARTS

I

THE ESSENCE OF EXPRESSIONISM

The art movement known as Expressionism, a term derived from its German form *Expressionismus*, eludes all close and compact definition. Its kernel and its contours are still unfixed, its surfaces are dimmed with the breath of debate or with the frost of negation. Even in Germany, the very country in which it took its rise and where it was built into a system, a method, a cult and even a *Weltanschauung*, there is, despite the German gift for categories, no accepted definition. Its relationship to Italian futurism, to cubism and other movements is now clear, now murkily mystic. Yet it has become a force to be reckoned with in every art and in every land. It has spiritualized and given new life and impetus to the art-revolutionary groups in Russia,

in Scandinavia, in France. It has passed across the ocean and into the brains and fingers of the younger or youngest generation of American creators.

When the foremost Expressionist painters, sculptors and architects are asked to define the term, none of them finds a ready answer. Each falters and gropes darkly for words. Each seeks to imprison a meaning in terms which he can not translate from something that is clear and strong within his own soul or æsthetic consciousness, if nowhere else. Each struggles with the elusiveness of giving this inner concept some concrete form or the garment of an idea. The creative artist, however sure he may be of the force that inspires and impels him, flounders and founders in the glimmering slough of the instinctive and the undefinable. Sometimes he even makes a virtue of necessity, or ignorance, or impotence. That which he cannot intellectually postulate, he strives to present as something mystically incommensurable. This element is not unwelcome, is not without its distinct value to the creative artist, but on the part of the art critic from whom we demand intellect, psychology and analysis, it signifies a mortal capitulation.

The definitions and elucidations published in

books are almost as obscure and full of groping-in-the-shadow. Treatises by Hermann Bahr, by Max Peri, by Wilhelm Hausenstein, by Franz Landsberger, by Georg Marzynski, by Rudolf Blümner and others give ingenious summaries, brilliant contra-positions between *Expressionismus* and *Impressionismus*, or invest the subject with a veil or a scaffolding of ideology or paradoxical abstraction. The most common and obvious refuge is to set up and dilate upon the antithesis between Expressionism and Impressionism, but many intellectual and logical pitfalls lower in this—there is a point where the differences melt, and opposite poles and extremes become neutralized and take on the same face.

Instinct alone, I am convinced, can lead one aright and intuition and instinct postulate *this* judgment: the essence of Expressionism lies in something indefinable because it is rooted in the instinctive, the intuitional, the esoteric. Like poetry it can be felt but not defined. He who is attuned or adjusted to it knows what is Expressionism, but not what Expressionism is. Nevertheless, even though there be no precise academic or scientific formula there are charts and guideposts and signal fires into these new lands and seas.

The driving force of this new movement or this divergence, is something immanent—indwelling in the emotions, the soul, the vision, the imagination. It is an impulse, a yearning, an aspiration which has acquired a certain indefinite, graphic speech or mannerism—the medium in which it sought to render its feelings intelligible to the spirit, the eye—or ear. It is the art of a new visualization of the outward world, transmuted, transmogrified by the inner-perception sublimated by apperception. But between the medium of presentation and the medium of reception and apprehension there lies a great gap—and the limitation of the human senses can not bridge this gap. Thus, however clear in an absolute sense the thought or the emotion of Expressionism may be, its media and machinery are still imperfect, still hampered by the lack of a suitable universal organ to comprehend their content. The Unutterable, the Unattainable, the Inachievable would take on flesh and form, but the Spirit not only overflows, but bursts the form.

Expressionism in its highest and widest form is therefore only a convention for the Inexpressible. Even its drawn, painted and hewn symbols are but substitutes for the ultimate ideal of

the supreme Expressionist—the conveyance of a thought or an emotion from man to man directly and without intermediary agencies or media of forms, lines, sounds or language.

We moderns who have become accustomed to half a century of impressionistic painting, we who have been taught to see the world with the impressionistic eye, can no longer conceive of impressionism as anything unnatural. Yet in its day this school with its characteristic analysis of light, color and atmosphere, its theory of reflexes and of painting the world as one saw it, was almost as chaotically, anarchistically revolutionary as the expressionistic irruption and revolt of to-day.

The Expressionist commonly defines his art as one that acts upon the external world from within—from the soul, mind or spirit outwardly. The Impressionist is one upon whose soul or faculties the External World acts and whose spirit or faculties thereupon react and reproduce this impression, through the vehicle of a gift, character or—to use a dangerous phrase which has wrought much havoc in the æsthetics of our time—through a temperament. Both the Expressionist and the Impressionist give forth—that is, express. The chief difference between them lies in the source of the raw product or material and the

creation of the finished product. The Impressionist, having freed himself from the superstition of mass vision (such as a sheet of paper being always white), paints a man or a tree and seeks to array the colors, masses and contours of this apparition as it impinges upon the retina of his eye, even though, like the Pointillist, he must break up and atomize every ray into its primary color. The Expressionist, limning by inner light, shuts out the visible world and projects his idea, his feeling or his memory of the visible apparition seen transmuted and sublimated. Thus it is not the blue sky, the green grass which he seeks to paint, but his relation, his reaction, his feeling toward these—the quality of blueness or greenness, the essence or nature of the sky, the spirit or significance of the grass. The coarsely objective is refined and spiritualized into the varified, the subjective, the noun into an adjective, the thing into its extract—its real self—its "soul."

All this drags the Expressionist towards the abstract, toward the deliberate avoidance of those familiar hieroglyphs of drawing or language, with which men have conspired or agreed to represent nature or natural sounds. Without these,

to be sure, he is at once lost in the Great Inane, but the very instant he employs them, they fetter him to something that suggests this or that in the visible world of realities, or ideas reflected by that world. Hence the cry for "substanceless art" is bound to remain unsatisfied, since every color, line or form is inextricably, like sounds and smells, associated with a definite impression.

The true Expressionist, such as Kandinsky, does not, however, attempt to paint abstract forms *per se*. He seeks to impress upon the content of his work of art not these forms in themselves but abstractions of these forms. The will of the Expressionist is the will to a new formation. Dismemberment of nature is the first phase in the fury of a new creation—the organic is shown petrified into formal or geometric figures—the abstraction of geometry and of mathematics at once exercises its spell upon the imagination of the Expressionist. In addition we find the Expressionist seized not only by a fury for disintegrating and dismembering the old or natural forms, but with a lust for action which lashes him on to create—an almost spasmodic action—the art of the "*Aktivist*." This *Aktivismus* with

its official organ *Die Aktion*, is a section of German Expressionism—one that is colored by fiercely radical doctrines in politics.

Pent in the *maya* of association, the Expressionist, throwing or irradiating forth his thought, feeling or aspiration, is dependent, if he would be "understood," upon the very impression which his æsthetic missile makes upon him who is exposed to it. The prophets of Expressionism, such as Herwarth Walden and Rudolf Blümner, are therefore quite logical in demanding for the full and fuller comprehension of Expressionism, the cultivation, or the natural gift of an æsthetic visual quality—"*künstlerisches Sehen*."

"The layman, that is to say, the man inexperienced in visualizing fictional means of expression," writes Blümner in his "*Geist des Kubismus und die Künste*," "has an indefinite impression, difficult to describe, of a tangle of diversified lines, forms and colors, disordered, even fortuitous. Or is there really an intention in all this? But in the very feeling of the possibility of an intentional disorder, we already find the germ of recognition of a will that orders and regulates. It is only the goal, the purpose which the layman does not recognize. Finally he begins to 'distinguish' forms in these pictured pre-

sentments which seem to be mere tangles to him, 'things' familiar to him, or he begins to identify their images, houses, trees, human or animal bodies, limbs or parts of such 'things' or forms with which he associates these or similiar objects. He declares the whole to be 'incomprehensible' because the picture generates no thoughts and no feelings in him. He suspects something mystic or symbolical, some secret language of messieurs the Cubists! He demands a key to the riddle—a key from without. But no one seems to possess such a key. Yet there are persons who are sensible of more—these pictures for some reason or other charm them to a longer contemplation. And in nearly all cases this contemplation leads to a recognition of that which induced the charm: the realization that the disorder in the picture is only an apparent disorder. In reality there *is* order. But by what standards is this order to be measured? And what, after all, is order?"

"Art is production, not reproduction," cries Herwarth Walden, the leader of the well-known "Sturm" movement in Germany—"*Kunst ist Gabe, nicht Wiedergabe.*" But this epigram, like so many that show a close affinity to the pun or play on words and slide with fatal facility from tongue or pen, contains only a half truth. It is

directed here against the object and the artist subject to the object, against nature, against the sophisticated or conventional seizure or representation of nature. Nature, once the goddess and guide of the creative artist, the model, source and touchstone of all excellence, is regarded by the radical Expressionists as the evil, seductive element, the temptress unto imitativeness, the bondage to the material, the sheer and easy descent toward all traditional and conventionalized Trash. It is nature, they declare, which prevents an art creation from being or becoming art. The artist who accepts her laws, even the law of perspective, becomes a slave to the outer world, a forger of reality. He violates the innate truth that sanctifies the real creator. He is inferior to the child, for does not the child, as August Macke declares, "create directly out of his inmost feelings, and this to a greater degree than the imitators of Greek forms?" Hence, like the destructive impulse of the child, comes the overpowering desire to disintegrate nature, to tear her own syntheses apart and recompose her elements nearer to the heart's desire.

Art transcends nature. Expressionistic or absolute Art would transcend all the simulacra of nature which Art has made in her name or its own.

The theory of the art purity and art sanctity of the child has in it something mystically esoteric, with rudiments of the religious-sentimental. The affinity between the instantaneous seizure and registering of the external world by the fresh and uncorrupted infant hand and fancy, and the artificial products of the mature Expressionist artist has been admirably shown by Dr. G. F. Hartlaub in his book, "*Der Genius im Kinde.*" Here are drawings which the greatest masters of Expressionistic art might well envy.

The next step upward from the infantile inspiration was the adoration of the art of the primitive peoples, even of cavemen drawings, of Polynesian motifs, as in the rich and smoldering paintings of Max Pechstein, in short of "niggerism," and that exotic Africanish element which we find in the work of many Continental painters and sculptors of to-day. The two-dimensional friezes of the Egyptians, the bronzes of Benin in Africa, the ivory carvings of the Congo tribes—that weird savage Gothic of the Dark Continent—are regarded with great veneration by most modern Expressionists.

Truth, according to the Expressionistic credo, is not coincident with the outer world of nature, but coincident with the inner world of the artist.

But in what degree is the artist God wholly free and immune from the bondage of the crass, palpable, hard-ribbed world? Where is the boundary-line between production and reproduction? Where, in the unceasing flux and flow, the metabolism of impressions from without and impressions from within, is the fixed arc and focus to be found—that inevitable point or moment at which the current of impressions is apotheosized into the divine product, Art? In the rays and vortices, in the splashes, explosions and convulsions of form and color in a painting by Kandinsky, what law, or even what impulse led to the laying on this color instead of another, the drafting of a straight instead of a curved line? The artist will jealously and proudly maintain that every stroke is inevitable, but we knew that this is an illusion, for to accept it would signify a surrender to a kind of fatalism which would degrade the artist from his rank as a creator to that of a mere medium or agent. The artist may see things as he asserts in paint that he has seen them, but since he cannot give his eyes to another, his product and its aspect in relation to its creator remains insulated and isolated forever. In a painting, say, by Oskar Kokoschka in which a fresh-faced, handsome young woman becomes

converted into a blear-eyed hag—a man in his prime dissolved into the likeness of a lunatic or of one dead for a month—a child, as in his "*Knieendes Mädchen*," given the attributes of middle age—what new vision is necessary in the spectator of such a painting in order to translate these forms and colors into the values given them by their creator?

It is one of the anomalies of abstract expressionistic art that no flight is actually possible from the naturalistic into the purely abstract or absolute—for even in its most arbitrary conceptions we find that some prototype exists in nature. Let us, for example, close our eyes, and by vigorous rubbing set the wheels and arcs of color, light and multiform shapes flaring and revolving in the blood beneath the lid—in the eyeball and the brain. Could we seize or hold fast in pigment one of these kaleidoscopic effects—what would the result be? Surely Expressionistic art—for are there not thousands of paintings of this school resembling what we would see? Yet such a picture would, after all, be only an impressionistic one, since it would be a mere reproduction of nature—of a natural phenomenon. Only in its outward form would such a painting be expressionistic—a visualization of something

"inwardly" seen, but seen with the fleshly, not with the spiritual eye, and no more abstract, substanceless art, than would be a photograph of blood corpuscles. And yet it is a music, a symphony of color, rhythmic with the direct pulse of life. The Expressionist would naturally disown such a "reproduction," as arising from the reaction of the physical organ and not of the soul—something inconceivably more rarified. But what is there in the organ or faculty of the soul or imagination which has not been previously established in the senses—reacting from the visible, tangible world?

Even in their most impassioned flight from reality, even in the martyrdom imposed upon their hands and fancies in the desperate effort to transmute their work into pure spirit without face or form, the Expressionists are indissolubly fettered to the remembered forms or colors or meanings of things. The circles, ovals, rods, lightnings and lines in Kandinsky's abstract drawings or compositions seduce the eye and fancy to associations with reality. To get over this difficulty or to explain it away, Rudolf Blümner, himself a prophet of absolute painting, has coined the terms primary and secondary forms. The forms created by the true Expres-

sionist are primary, those with which we associate them are secondary. But here, it is clear, we are face to face with the old problem: which was first, the egg or the hen? The expressionist artist himself confesses that he can create no forms other than those which already exist in the Cosmos. His flight therefore is from the syntheses of these forms to the rudiments of them by way of disintegration, from Evolution to Devolution, back to the Archtype or the mere germ of the Archtype, even to Chaos.

Coiled in the very womb of his own primeval fire-mist, he seeks to shape the world anew, feels himself as God, as Creator out of the *Urstoff*—the primeval matter of the spirit as of flinty planets. This tremendous revolt from the world of to-day, this panic fright of the hell without, with war, imperialism, organized mass-poisoning and all the horrible machinery of a desouled universe at last nakedly revealed, has sent the true and inspired Expressionist upon a new search for God. The high priests of the movement cite even Thomas Aquinas who differentiated the *species impresa* and the *species expresa*. "The *species impresa* (or impressionism) is the part of the sinful or carnal man, the *species expresa* (or expressionism) is the part of the angels and of souls lib-

erated from the body." It is not only the flight from reality, nature, space and time which is the motive force behind this new dispensation in art. It is also the triumph of the cosmic over the personal, the destiny of all humanity in opposition to the destiny of the individual man.

All this hints at a new romanticism—the establishment of a fictive world, a refuge from the actual one. Yet to call the Expressionist a Romantic or Neo-romantic would be an error. The Romanticist creates a world upon the pattern of the real world, only infinitely fairer and therefore false, and deliberately shuts his eyes to the asperities and ugliness of Reality. He denies life as an ordeal and his Romanticism is to him a drug or an anodyne. But the true Expressionist not only realizes and expresses the real world—that is, its veritable soul, as he declares, but he is as pitiless toward his own feelings as toward those of his fellow men. The inherent, the arcane truth is what he seeks and this explains the hideousness, the inhuman, other-worldly terror and strangeness that dwell in much expressionistic art.

Many Expressionists, when halted or harried by bolts of logic, seek refuge in the analogies and parallelisms of music—the most abstract of all arts. Hermann Bahr, the distinguished Aus-

trian author, in his brilliant exposition of the Expressionist message, soul and vision, denounces the Impressionist as a "man degraded to be the gramophone of the external world." Expressionism on the other hand is to him "eye music"—"optical harmony." That which the composer hears with inward ear and sets down in notes which, interpreted and translated by instruments, transfer his mood or feeling to other souls, the Expressionist painter sees with his inward eye and sets down graphically to operate upon the outward eye of others.

This deliberate confusion of the arts and the senses contains more than one fallacy. One need point out only one great difference—the continuity of music and the simultaneity of painting—music motor-progressive in time and space, painting static and fixed in time and space. This objection is not rendered less valid by the contention that the ear takes in only one note after another. Music is a motor art, a living flow, a defilation of notes, each, perhaps, related to and bound up with the one preceding and the one following. Painting is an array of colors and forms which, once precipitated, are eternally and simultaneously coëxistent—before and after. A close approach to the nature of music is made pos-

sible through the medium of the painting in motion, particularly through the agency of the film, as I explain in "The Visible Symphony." But in static painting all "action" is but petrification compared to the living dynamics of music. The elements of rhythm and vibration establish the real relation between the two arts, as between the two senses through which each becomes manifest, and this relation is as the relation between the waves of the luminiferous ether and the waves of the air.

Though aware of its incompleteness, I have ventured to offer this definition of Expressionism: *direct action in art*—the forthright naked impulse, delivered without intermediaries, straight from the imagination to the outer world—like a child from the womb. Familiarity with the influences that have dominated the movements in art during the centuries must teach us that this impulse is not a new invention or discovery. The Expressionists themselves are constantly discovering devotees of the expressionistic formula in masters ancient and modern, as, for example, in some of the Gothic and pre-Raphaelite painters and sculptors. Thus Max Pechstein declares that his conversion to Expressionism took place many years ago in Siena when all his senses

throbbed in the contemplation of a certain picture of Giotto's in which a sky-blue Christ was seated upon a rose-red donkey which was relieved against a violet wall, this in turn rising out of an olive-green ground. The spontaneous rapture of Byzantine and Gothic sculptors and painters, distorting nature in the sheer fiery abandon of adoration and creation, brought forth expressionistic art, as many a cathedral and relic still *expresses.*

These works were wrought in days when man's vision was not only clarified but partly blinded by an inner light, and when he was less observant and analytical of the world about him. In many of the drawings of Albrecht Dürer we find the expressionistic trait or manner—the "Melancholia" though naturalistic in composition, is expressionistic in inspiration. This applies also to the intense ecstatic visions and emotional passion of Matthias Grünewald's altar pieces, and to the strange, spiritualized and apocalyptic landscapes of Hercules Seegers, an almost forgotten Dutch etcher of the 17th century—a forerunner of expressionistic visualization. In William Blake the expressionistic inspiration and aspiration are clearly visible as well as in such moderns as the French Cézanne, the Swiss Hodler and the Norwegian Munch. All these men, though still us-

ing naturalistic symbols, wrought expressionistically—with this passion of inwardness dominating theme and treatment.

Franz Marc, the painter who like his colleague, August Stramm, the poet, was killed in the war, was one of the first prophets of Expressionism in Germany. He had distilled his art into something which while not entirely deforming nature or converting it into a gaseous form or a schematic diagram, nevertheless transcended it. Thus in his picture, "Tiger," we have actually the essence, the soul, the very nature of the tiger presented and compressed in a single conventionalized head and in the summary of characteristic attitudes. Marc Chagall, who like Kandinsky and Archipenko, is a Russian by birth, expresses his world —that of the soil, the village, the peasant and the animal—by means of rudimentary forms and fragments presented in an utterly naïve and primitive manner—the "thoughts" of the moujik, the "thoughts" of the beast, the thoughts of the painter himself assuming concrete form and assembling themselves into one complex or maze, even though some of the figures are shown standing on their heads as in the image cast by a photographic lens. Paul Campendonk follows a similar method and choice of subjects. Paul Klee

with ragged, uncertain and even dirty strokes of the pen, would seem ambitious of conveying the spasmodic and nebulous cerebral or nervous reaction to visual stimula, one thought or image connected with or tangential to another—a medley of forms and the spores of forms, apparently childish in conception and execution and adhering loosely or closely one to another, like so many ganglia with their cells or elements floating in the general fry of the drawing—as in the "*Bootverleiher.*"

Rudolf Bauer is of the school Kandinsky and dissolves himself into subtle symbolisms of "primary" forms, colors and movements. César Klein and Max Pechstein revert to a kind of Edenic Expressionism—the Polynesian primitive with many a light and tint borrowed from Gauguin—rude, smoldering, powerful work. They transmute the whole European cosmos into the glow and heat of the South Sea jungle, white Caucasian skin into ruddy reds and browns and fallow ochres, yet never relinquish their firm hold upon naturalistic forms—ingeniously conceived. Lyonel Feininger, an American by birth, who has lived for thirty-five years in Germany, has gone through various phases of Expressionism. Through these ascendant phases and stages, he

has by degrees become the most spiritual and ascetic of the Expressionists of Germany. His latest abstract paintings are filled with a strange transparency and luminosity, as of other or inner worlds, glassy walls and planes that carry the eye and soul to new infinities of light, radiance and distance beyond distance. Here indeed we approach close to painting that has succeeded in fixing the "soul" of things, the astral body, as it were, of towns and other apparitions of the external world, and causes the soul of the beholder to vibrate in unison with that of the artist. Yet Feininger, fervently bent upon rarifying his art more and more, must in the final analysis ascend to absolute space, to the negation of all line and color, to the blank void—the Expressionist zealot's progression to Nirvana.

In addition there are a number of powerful painters and original and bizarre "graphiker" who have achieved solid reputations and an enthusiastic following but who are recognized by the radical body rather as inverted than true expressionists. Among the foremost of these are Willy Jaeckel with his rude sweep, his gigantic-grandiose treatment of biblical subjects, his adoration of the Earth and of a dull earthen color—a vision of exaltation goes through his

work; Bruno Krauskopf with his delicate luminous exploitation of vegetable and floral forms, giving them almost human and often spiritual significance; Erich Waske, a painter of boldest line and mass, of volcanic landscapes and doomsday firmaments splendored by dying suns; Erich Heckel with strange glimpses of a world wrenched awry, yet presenting unfamiliar aspects of our own—as in "The Glassy Day"; George Grosz, the caricaturist with a deliberately cultivated schoolboy technique of hard gritty lines and overlappings, who has nevertheless converted it into a drastic medium for his semi-political, semi-erotic satire, burning with hatred of the former ruling classes of Germany, Edwin Ebertz, Heckendorf, Schmidt-Rottluff, the designer of the despoiled eagle-crow of Germany's new coat-of-arms, Scharff, the sculptor, and many others. Even though they do not belong to the extreme or absolute wing of *Expressionismus*, these men have each their own fresh message and their independent freedom and courage.

The Expressionist world of Germany embraces the whole zodiac of the arts and rounds itself out to something that rests upon an entire new *Weltanschauung*. The mystic nature of the Russians has, as a kind of feminine element, united itself

with the metaphysical quality of the Germans, and brought forth this new cosmogony of arts. Kandinsky was the ferment in painting, Archipenko in sculpture. Architects, dramatists, poets, musicians destroyed the old forms that bound them and evolved new principles. The so-called German revolution acted as a great driving force and gave the whole movement an immense impetus and a broader political, social and historical significance than if it had begun purely as an æsthetic revolution.

The sculptor, fettered to the three-dimensional mass, has always encountered the greatest, almost insurmountable difficulties in expressing the abstract, the symbolical or even the allegorical. Among the Expressionist sculptors of Germany who have proceeded entirely from the abstract, with only a faint memory or survival of naturalistic forms, Oswald Herzog occupies a lofty place. He has molded his "*Plastiken*" in strict accordance with his own intellectualized laws, his conception of physics, the play and interplay of forces and rhythms, the powers of outer space pressing against the material Earth, producing concavity and convexity, a series of waves, attraction and repulse, dynamic rhythm. Rudolf Belling, another abstractionist, has conceived of

space itself as plastic and the air tracts and hollows of his remarkable figures are to him as positive as the concrete solids—air for him has taken on a new relation to the thing submerged in it. Lehmbruck, a sculptor who attenuates his figures to the hypernatural tenuous spirituality we find in certain mediæval sculptures, such as the St. Pierre of Moissac, has attained great popularity, though the "true" Expressionists disclaim him.

Among architects Erich Mendelsohn has evolved his thesis of dynamic architecture and carried it into effect. The building, fecundated by the germ of the architect's imagination, evolves itself from within in answer to the pressure of its own necessity and use. That is, the abstract building is first projected as an idea, this undergoes organic evolution, and part is added to part as by a kind of natural accretion under the dominance of the æsthetic will of the creator. Bruno Taut has set up a new credo of architecture, of the human passion for building, bound up with astral fancies and a revolutionary, utopian afflatus, a cult of color and an architectonic rhapsody in floral or crystal forms. Hans Poelzig has striven for a new symphony and synthesis of architecture, making his art the vehicle of the dumb, unformulated hunger for an archi-

tectural language felt, even though unconsciously, by the form-dumb, form-blind modern masses. There are strange dreamers like the brothers Luckhardt, bizarre phantasts like Hermann Finsterlin, practical revolutionaries like Walter Gropius, head of the famous *Staatliche Bauhaus* at Weimar, with his naked, blunt almost brutal cubistic masses, architecture *per se*, reminiscent in part of the work of Frank Lloyd Wright. In music Arnold Schönberg has achieved a reputation and Herwarth Walden a fiercely loyal following among the members of the "Sturm" group.

In expressionistic literature the central and dominant note of the movement was an ecstatic element with which the new men sought to expand and disintegrate and even explode the fetters and barriers of language. Language was to be deflated, to be melted and hammered down to its ultimates, stripped and shorn of all redundancies. A whole word was to be compressed and concentrated into a letter, a whole line into a word, a whole stanza or paragraph into a line. Expressionism became explosionism, the words fragments laden with quintessential extracts of sense, intelligible often only to the writer, a stenographic, telegramic style between the interstices of which super-significances were to lie

packed like mortar between stones or which were to serve as lightning rifts in whose divine glare whole landscapes were to lie revealed. In the poetry of the late August Stramm, in that of Johannes Becher, Lothar Schreyer and others, the verse forms often became mere grids, mere skeletons or vertebræ, word piled upon word like the elements in a Voltaic pile. But the words themselves remained obdurate, unplastic, dead, despite the highstrung fury that played about them. Bound by chains of association, by links of connotation, by earth-fast roots of age-old usage, by color or content, the word remained invested with its own essence and could not be forced to vibrate with the often chaotic, incommensurable thought of the poet. The brain of the reader apprehended only the word and its penumbra. The speech, tortured by these Procrustean mechanics, became stammering, staccato, a network through which the esoteric meaning, often a very thin one, slipped and was lost.

Yet in this balling-together (*Zusammenballung*) and compression of speech, there lay an effort in the right direction—even though the medium would not rise to the level of the flaming will that strove to force it to a kind of hyper-accentuation. In certain poets such as Franz

Werfel and Martin Buber, the expressionistic element is more evident in the content and manner than in the form, a feverish exaltation, an otherworldliness, lighting and flickering through the lines. In the diabolical work of the scabrous Curt Corrinth ("Bordell," etc.) the abrupt, staccato form took on a tremendous *élan* and restlessness which in combination with the humorous-erotic theme, produced effects that were convulsively original, though in the end, exhausting. With the dramatists the dialogue, to some extent already adumbrated by Carl Sternheim with his omission of articles and personal pronouns, took the form of a sublimation of individual speech into cosmic speech. The medium or impelling force was again ecstasy. The characters were stripped of their personality and designated merely as The Father, The Son, The Millionaire, The Workman, etc. The fate of the individual was no longer of moment: always he was the organ, the symbol of the community or of humanity—a type. These abstractions were subordinated to the function of parts of a machine, the machine of life, of society, of the world.

The speech of these carriers or puppets, as in Georg Kaiser's "Gas," was as the explosion of a gas compressed in cylinders under the pressure of

the author's will or inspiration. All extraneous parts were lopped away from this speech—the personal pronoun "I" almost vanished, the pronouns of the second person too—all became universal. The dialogue was almost uniformly under pressure, a pressure so direct, so vehement in its *expressure*, as actually to resemble the discharge of mechanisms, each discharge preparing the mechanism for a new charge. In this kind of dialogue, the drama not only drove itself along by the cogwheels of the strophe and antistrophe of the dialogue, but by shocks and concussions. The intensity and compactness of the lines and their declamation called for a corresponding intensity of attention on the part of the audience. The danger of this continual over-emphasis is obvious—a monotony that deprives itself of all shadow and all relief. But since the Expressionists had declared that every word of their texts was as valuable and as important as every other, each demanded an equal stress. The words fall like blows of a hammer, like thrusts of a foil; the dramatic convention takes on a new face and voice, a new manner of intonation, varied chiefly by the individuality of each *enactor*. In plays such as Walter Hasenclever's "Antigone," the action unrolled itself to the tempo of swift succes-

sive screams, and ecstasy, no longer to be maintained, led to cold anti-climaxes. In Ernst Toller, the young revolutionary playwright, the dynamics behind the themes derive their force chiefly from the fires of social revolt, the aspiration toward betterment of life for the masses. The challenge of the guilty older generation and of the society it brought forth, by the younger men, clarified by suffering and catastrophe, or made morbid by brooding upon human wrongs, finds expression in such half-ecstatic, half-hysterical dramas as Hasenclever's "Sohn" and Arnold Bronnen's "Vatermord."

The dance, like music, is claimed by the Expressionists (for once in agreement with all non-Expressionists) as one of the purest and most immediate of arts, almost void of all auxiliary agencies. To them it is the art of movement, elaborated, in the art of the actor, into an additional art, that of speech-art (*Sprechkunst*). Both these arts, like sculpture itself, are actually two-dimensional, since all of them present to the eye only a picture fixed or moving upon a flat plane. The three-dimensional in space cannot be seized by the eye, but only by the sense of touch. Recession and progression are mere tricks of optical perspective. The pure art of

the dance remains art—autonomous art—even when executed by marionettes or abstract figures, dependent not upon a set theme, but upon the artistic relation in which they stand to one another.

The revolt of Expressionism against the prevailing and the traditional brought forth the imitative and the fraudulent to a greater degree than any other art movement. Impressionism, however abrupt its break may have been with the realism or naturalism of the former schools, nevertheless remained bound, however prismatically, to the vision of external nature. This naturally demanded a capacity for representing and imitating nature, technical and graphical skill and training. But Expressionism denied the need of an artistic training—through its very nature it could not admit the authority of another will from without, of a master who was also a teacher. "Schools" of Expressionism are therefore to that degree a repudiation of the idea of Expressionism. Actually the Expressionist is born, not made, and since all men are born, all men are in the degree of their natural capacity Expressionists in the art which they spontaneously evolve or express—even the infant—the purest artist of them all. This dogma has given a certain

specious logic to the philosophy of the maddest Dadaists and to the infantile humors of such ultra-radicals as Kurt Schwitters and his "Merz" art. This consists of constructionist compositions built up of bits of raw or painted wood, wires, discs, fragments of newspaper advertisements and tram tickets—humblest materials with which, as he declares, the highest art may be achieved—"arrangements" in matter-creation. Expressionist dogma carried to its logical conclusion would postulate this: There can be no false Expressionistic art, since every expression of an inner impulse must, like the impulse itself, be natural and as inevitably personal as the voice or signature of the individual. Every Expressionist thus has or must have his own pronounced and unique "style"—a law that holds good in all art—whatever its tendency.

The ease, the apparent ease, with which Expressionism expressed itself naturally brought about disastrous consequences. Every scrawl or daub, every bizarre or half-decorative array of lines, often the result of random trifling or of the insolent presumption of those to whom all art was alien and whose efforts often seemed nothing more than a bad or shameless joke, was received as solemnly authentic art. "Works" which

might actually have been born of the spasmodic, half-mechanical, half-conscious movements of a child, were received as true and inspired art. There were creations, the lifeless and spurious origin of which for once gave ample justification to the immemorial cry of "fool" or "charlatan," launched by the "culture philistines" whenever anything new dawned upon the horizon of their school- and memory-limited lives. These cries were now intensified by a fierce revulsion and fury into screams of "swindlers" and "madmen," and a new Thirty Years' War in the field of art seemed about to unloose itself with true religious fervor throughout artistic Germany. The imitators brought great discredit upon the whole movement and gave weight to the prophecy of its early death—as a mere accompaniment or phenomenon of the disrupted times. It was not easy to distinguish the sincere expressionists from the mere imitators, since all forms and standards were not only lacking, but even inadmissible. The real criterion became something that transcended all rules, tradition and logic—a *Kunstschauen* or *Kunstgefühl*—a natural gift. But alone the initiate, the adept was blessed with these, and was thus able to pierce beneath the mask of the work and to trace back its incep-

tion to the heart or soul—or the mere ape instinct and the dead mimicry of the empty hand.

Expressionism is thus, at least in its present stage, an art alone for artists, despite its strivings for universality. Yet even the uninitiate are able to discern, or feel, without the exhortation of the mystigogues, the difference between one of Lyonel Feininger's sublimated abstract drawings or paintings, and the uncertain, arbitrary and bewildered efforts of one of the myriads of imposters—the Expressionists from without. The movement has reached its climax; its waves no longer lurch to and fro so madly and mountainously—the spume, driftwood and derelicts carried along by this new Gulf Stream in art have sunk or been cast ashore. There are critics who, having hailed the new vision with shouts of rapture and the triumph of ingenuous discovery, now proclaim it to be dead or dying. But this is not true. Pablo Picasso's reputed *volte-face* from Cubism back to Ingres has drawn a number of painters in every country with him. The first convulsions, often the work of the more parasitic elements, have subsided and the disruptive effects of this æsthetic dynamite have become less noticeable because the old fabric is already loosened in all its joints and the strange solvents have pene-

trated into the art of every land. Many again have renounced Expressionism because they have wearied of it as a fad, or because they could not keep pace nor maintain breath with a movement that left the easy and comfortable beaten track and disclosed itself only to the devotee. The eye of the up-growing generation, already attuned to its aspects, no longer finds expressionistic art pure chaos or anarchy.

The summary of the Expressionistic creed or formula may be stated as follows: The immediate expression which the artist receives and transfers to canvas or to paper is not art. Nor is the presence of feeling or temperament in the work to be considered as art. Nor is art to be attained by the reproduction of an object, a feeling or an impression, *but only by the transmutation of this impression into art*, into an artistic relationship of means of rhythm. "The reproduction of an impression," says Blümner, "is not art; it remains impression. It is only through transformation to the purely artistic, that is, the pure, abstract vision of this impression—that we attain to expression—*Expressionism*. The formation of the individual experience (impression) by virtue of art, results in the work of art."

This esoteric and cryptic definition is in keep-

ing with the mysticism and obscurantism of Expressionism, and its reaching forth to the Cosmic and the Immanent. Hermann Bahr, already comfortably and monkishly immersed in the warm clouds and waters of his Neo-Catholicism, has striven, citing copiously from Goethe's lesser known scientific and æsthetic works, to draw many a parallel between his dicta in art and the aspects of modern Expressionism. Goethe in his "Data for a History of the Theory of Color," points out that there are sciences for which knowledge does not suffice, sciences which must transcend themselves and become something higher—that is to say, Art. "Since nothing whole can be created either out of Knowledge or out of Reflection, because the first is lacking in Inwardness and the second in Outwardness, we are forced to think of Science (*Wissenschaft*) as Art, whenever we expect a sense of Entirety from it. . . . But in order that we should be able to fulfill such a demand we must exclude no human force or faculty from scientific participation. The profounds of intuition, a firm contemplation of the present, mathematical depth, physical accuracy, the acme of reason, the keenness of intellect, the phantasy moving and full of yearning, a fond joy in the sensuous—none of these can be omitted in

order to seize the propitious moment and exploit it in a live and fruitful sense, that moment which alone can give birth to a work of art, no matter what its content may be."

If Expressionism is to be regarded not merely as a force which loosened up and disintegrated the petrified forms and conglomerations which tradition, blind usage and the Ape-in-Man had imposed upon humanity like so many other tyrannies, but as a positive and vital revelation in itself, its value to America is clear. But even if it be regarded as æsthetic Ecrasite, as something chiefly destructive, its value should be clear. Our art, being composed of all the traditions and all the faiths of Europe, requires more than any other, a pronunciamento of liberation, a creed to illuminate and vivify. The petrifications of the centuries have become prisons for us. The Classic shackles of Greece and Rome, the seductive poison of Paris, the sentimental hollowness and literary artificiality of the British Academy and the Neo-classic or pre-Raphaelite tradition, have been accepted by us humbly and unquestioningly. This was, perhaps natural for a colonial people, but the continuance of this æsthetic serfdom, means the continuance of national eunuchism in art, of that mimicry with

which an inferior culture does homage to the superior, and, unless the will to emulate or transcend it be active, vitiates itself.

It is, of course, inevitable that as the children and heirs of Europe we should have accepted the European traditions. But the homogeneous peoples of Europe each colored and reshaped this tradition in obedience to the spirit of the race, national idiosyncrasy and the powerful, inexhaustible resources of their folklore. We, however, have accepted the whole apparatus and paraphernalia ready-made, and it has remained sterile in so far as our power to give these forms a new content is concerned. Our tastes, traditions and prejudices in art are all derivative through mass memory and mass movement. Passions in art we have none, not even the passion of our immutable orthodoxy. In our art we have attained a "normalcy" almost as rigid, dead and uniform as the interchangeable parts of our automobiles.

Our cultural danger as a young people now grown almost adult lies in our spiritual subjection to peoples already grown old—to Europe in general, and to England and France in particular —to the first in an intellectual-literary, to the second in an æsthetic sense.

Expressionism as a means to an end can serve our ends. It can teach us the lesson of a spiritual-æsthetic contemplation so intense, pure and sacrificial that all ties and husks are cast off and the artist becomes invested with a new courage and a new freedom of creation almost as high and holy as the glory and fruition of creation itself. Toward this consummation the burning particularism, the intense, brooding passion for the individualistic and all its values, the intellectual fanaticism ready to go to ruin for the sake of an idea or an ideal, which characterizes the German soul, can only be of inestimable service to those forces full of promise which are struggling for artistic liberty and recognition in the America of to-day. If our path in art is to lead to fruitful fields of untrammeled and indigenous production, we, one of the youthful nations of the world, must again borrow—this time something of the fire that now burns in the veins of two other youthful nations —Germany and Russia. In both art has again attained something of the mystical quality of a religion—of a *Gottessuchen*. Both nations are now working out their destiny in art in the shadow of defeat and under the burden of a great national agony. America, who has discovered Europe and feels herself uneasy in the light that

still streams from her, should employ this light in setting her own House of Art in order, ridding herself first of all of her fatal conservatism in ideas and in art. This conservatism is only the child of Fear. And the materialism of our all too easy success and our wealth is as fatal to the spirit as the materialism that invests the putative victors in the World War. To learn from the vanquished would signify for us a new departure, a breaking-down of the bondage called Paris and Rome.

If it be our fate to borrow until we have attained that security, that serenity and inner exaltation which will give us the spiritual air and soil necessary for the growth of true art, then let us borrow words of battle, torches to burn and levers to dismantle our bastilles. Expressionism in its higher forms is such a dispensation —if we accept it in its purest sense. But those of us who have no illusions about our superficiality, our spasmodic enthusiasms, our burlesque cynicism, are also aware of the dangerous plaything Expressionism would prove—if we were reckless enough to accept it as a plaything. In that event it would inevitably mean the wrecking of the Old and the suicide of the New.

But hope has the right to be in the ascendant, for already there are signs that the new revelation has begun to wreak its will upon these younger and bolder spirits who are elected to wreak their will upon our art.

II

THE VIVIFYING OF SPACE

I

It is not of Einstein's theory of relativity nor of the fourth dimension that I would write. But of the sensuous conception of space, of space plastically felt in terms of art. Let us consider here space as a living factor in the picture play, space as a participant in the action, spirit, atmosphere and form of the film.

Ever since the camera learned the trick of manifolding in swift succession, the picture film has been a mechanical product, full of artificiality and even artfulness, but denied the breath and pulse of true art. It has been a mere medium of reproduction of the external lighted scene, a moving record of crass and unredeemed photography, however sumptuous some of its theatrical or scenic effects, however fantastic and ingenious some of its mechanical and optical possibilities. But art fled the lens which only the concrete reality or the constructed sham would

enter. "Moving pictures"—"movies"—the populace pierced instinctively through all pretenses and named them for what they were.

A true art for the film had not yet been invented or evolved. It had not yet found its true form, expression or convention. It was still the lively daughter of dead photography. A mock-world, the phantasm of the actual, projected itself upon the screen in all the tones of black and white and seared itself upon our aching retinæ. It mimicked the photograph, the theatrical stage, the painted picture, the formal tableau.

But at last the revolution of this world of light and shadow has begun—and in Germany. The creative element has entered it. The smug phantoms, the gorgeous settings, the smirking dolls with bared teeth and ox-like eyes, the creased cavaliers, prettified puppies and exotic sirens are threatened in their easy monopoly of this world. The background which to them had been a mere foil for their mouthings, oglings and struttings, has become alive.

The artist has slipped into this crude phantasmagoria and scenic slavery and has begun to create. He has seized upon unconjectured, æsthetic, dramatic and optical possibilities. Space —hitherto considered and treated as something

dead and static, a mere inert screen or frame, often of no more significance than the painted balustrade background at the village photographer's—has been smitten into life, into movement and conscious expression. A fourth dimension has begun to evolve out of this photographic cosmos.

The sixth sense of man, his feeling for space or room—his *Raumgefühl*—has been awakened and given a new incentive. Space has been given a voice. It has become a presence. It moves and operates by its distances and by its masses, static yet instinct with the expression of motion; it speaks with forms and with color values. It has taken on something dynamic and dæmonic, demanding not only attention but tribute from the soul. It has become an obedient genius in league with the moods and dreams and emotions of the artist bent on forcing his will upon the starers-at-the-screen.

This art, as I have already implied, is not a reflection of reality but a transformation of it, it may even be a distortion of it. The film is not to be a mere reproduction of life and the outer world, but a sublimation and adumbration of it—thus opening up many new perspectives.

The frozen and rigid forms and values of the outer and apparent world to which the lens and the sensitized celluloid strip are so relentlessly faithful, are broken up, dissolved and endowed with a new rôle. They are no longer a dead, two-dimensional background for the walking, kissing, dancing, murdering pantomimes and automata, but expressive presences, immanent forces that act not, but *react* and *enact.*

They claim and exercise the right to share in the dumb action of the living. The frown of a tower, the scowl of a sinister alley, the pride and serenity of a white peak, the hypnotic draught of a straight road vanishing to a point—these exert their influences and express their natures; their essences flow over the scene and blend with the action. A symphony arises between the organic and the inorganic worlds and the lens peers behind inscrutable veils. The human imagination is fructified and begins to react willingly or unwillingly. A new magic ensues, a new mystery possesses us.

This new treatment of the sense of space and feeling for room was first given expression in a film entitled, "*Das Kabinet des Dr. Caligari.*" It was described as the first expressionistic film

and embodied many original and instructive ideas. The creators were Walther Reimann, Walther Röhrig and Hermann Warm.

These men did not wish to produce a series of new and startling pictures. What they undertook was a scientific and æsthetic experiment in a new treatment of space. The sculpturesque, plastic treatment of space—that is, the three-dimensional—opposes itself to the two-dimensional world of the painted picture. Yet paint and color are liberally made use of. It is as though the third dimension—depth—had actually been added to the picture and had begun to develop itself—unto infinity, if you will. From this it would develop into the fourth dimension which may be conceived as time. Pictures are condition—space is existence. Space overrides the mere picture as street architecture overrides a poster or a signboard.

The adaptation of these laws and theories to the film was not mystic or esoteric, but very practical. A new instrument or medium is thus given us for playing upon the souls and imaginations of earth-dwellers. The film undergoes a kind of spiritual metamorphosis. The creative artist works in mass and matter like a god, reshaping the outer world or creating new worlds.

The scenic architect comes into his own—he broods upon and dominates furniture, room, house, street, city, landscape, universe!

Exaggeration and distortion of realistic or idealistic forms, the dissolving of the petrified Existent into other-worldliness or into arbitrary forms, are part of the expressionistic creed. We need not be discouraged nor have our respect for a new and vital principle lessened by the bizarre form it has been given. In this the film is but part of this subversive period. Its creativeness is at the same time dynamically destructive—a solvent of the old. It is partly chaos but only the chaos of the old, familiar and outworn, which reappear as disorganization,—as suggestion or survival matter retains its memory—the abstraction would equal annihilation.

The creators of "Dr. Caligari" as a film spectacle have used an audacious freedom in their exploitation of space. The plastic is amalgamated with the painted, bulk and form with the simulacra of bulk and form, false perspective and violent foreshortening are introduced, real light and shadow combat or reinforce painted shadow and light. Einstein's invasion of the law of gravity is applied and becomes visible in the treatment of walls and supports.

Trees are resolved into conventionalized, constructed forms, foliage becomes a mass of light, dark and shaded crescents, rounds and silhouettes —brilliantly colored in the original scene. Floors and pavements are streaked, splashed and spotted, divided and decorated in bars, crosses, diagonals, serpentines and arrows. The walls become as banners or as transparencies, space fissured by age, or as slates upon which the lightning blazes strange hieroglyphs. Or they become veils and vanish in a mosaic of scrambled forms and surfaces, like a liner in *camouflage*. A grim effort is made to extend perspective not only in flight from the spectator—that is, toward the background—but into and beyond the foreground, to overwhelm the spectator with it, to penetrate and transfix him with its linear life, to draw him into the trammels, the vortex of the action.

The first effect that strikes the eye in the Caligari film is the plastic richness and accentuation of all masses. We are plunged into a cubistic world of intense relief and depth, a stereoscopic universe. The modelling of the scenery is emphasized by painted high lights, by artificial shadows, by bands of color outlining masses and contours.

A corridor in an office building: Walls veering outward from the floor, traversed by sharply defined parallel strips, emphasizing the perspective, and broken violently by pyramidal openings streaming with light, marking the doors, the shadows between them vibrating as dark cones of contrast; the further end of the corridor murky, giving vast distance. In the foreground a section of wall violently tilted, as it were, over the heads of the audience. The floor cryptically painted with errant lines of direction—the floor in front of the doors shows cross lines, indicating a going to and fro, in and out. The impression is one of formal coldness, of bureaucratic regularity, of semi-public traffic. Life is given to this architectural energy, human life, by the wizard-like shape of Dr. Caligari himself, white-haired, bespectacled, in a bulky cloak and tall hat. His cane touches, and seems like an extension of, one of the floor lines. The actor must fit himself into the composition in costume, gesture and attitude.

A street at night: Yawning blackness in the background—empty, starless abstract space; against it a square, lop-sided lantern hung between lurching walls. Doors and windows constructed or painted in wrenched perspective.

Dark segments on the pavement accentuate the diminishing effect. The slinking of a brutal figure pressed against the walls, and evil spots and shadings on the pavement give a sinister expression to the street. Adroit diagonals lead and rivet the eye.

An attic: it speaks of sordidness, want and crime. The whole composition a vivid intersection of cones light and dark, of roof lines, shafts of light and slanting walls; projection of white and black patterns on the floor, the whole geometrically felt, cubistically conceived. This attic is out of time, but in space. The roofs and chimneys of another world arise and scowl through the splintered window pane.

A room, or, rather, room that has precipitated itself, incloses itself in cavern-like lines, in inverted hollows of frozen waves. Here space becomes cloistral and encompasses the human—a man reads at a desk. A triangular window glares and permits the living day a voice in this composition.

A garden: A figure in smooth black nakedness with a snow-white face moves with studied step and gesture along a painted wall. Across this crawl wave-like lines. Sharply-cut sections of

sky—tree silhouettes and spots of sun, awnings of foliage severely conventionalized.

A prison cell: A criminal, ironed to a huge chain attached to an immense trapezoidal "ball." The posture of the prisoner sitting on his folded legs is almost Buddha-like. Here space turns upon itself, incloses and focuses a human destiny. A small window high up, and crazily barred, operates like an eye. The walls, sloping like a tent's to an invisible point, are blazoned with black and white wedge-shaped rays. These bend when they reach the floor and unite in a kind of huge cross in the centre of which the prisoner sits, scowling, unshaven. The tragedy of the repression of the human in space—in a trinity of space, fate and man.

A white and spectral bridge yawning and rushing out of the foreground: It is an erratic, irregular causeway, such as blind ghouls might have built. It climbs and struggles upward almost out of the picture. In the middle distance it rises into a hump and reveals arches staggering over nothingnesses. The perspective pierces into vacuity. This bridge is the scene of a wild pursuit. Shafts of bifurcated cacti or skeleton shrubs lean at all angles along the parapet walls.

expressing excitement and tumult. Lanterns, also at all angles, point to nowhere, battered out of the perpendicular as grass is driven obliquely by the suction of an express train.

Several aspects of the market-place of a small town: An imposing and exposing play and interplay of masses, perspectives, lines, outlines, light and shadow, foreshortening of walls and arches. A lantern askew under an arch—the old lamplighter as the black core of an enormous star of light that is splashed upon the ground and eats into the shadows. A criss-cross play of light from doors and windows down the vistas of crooked streets in which the houses move and stretch, attract and repel one another. Channels full of latent human destinies.

The town cries out its will through its mouth, this market-place, its fears and hopes assemble here, its century-old soul is laid bare. The spots and lines of travel on the cobblestones people it with the spectres of generations of passers-by. They are the symbolical stenogram of the town's life and traffic.

Another scene: Climax—catastrophe. A vision of lurching roofs and pitching walls—the setting for another pursuit. The top of one wall is marked by a broad and tapering trail, shooting

forward like an arrow, like a beam of flight or light, and at the arrow's head a group—the tragic hero in his black skin-tight garment, carrying a white-clad woman in his arms, looming above vacuity, standing on the watershed between life and death. Gaunt chimneys rear and slant like masts in this city storm. Cunning lines of composition and the adroit use of diagonals drive the perspective into an invisible "vanishing-point." Two bright windows, trapezium-shaped, glow beneath in the world of men, directly under the roof. Here the outer husks, slopes and ridges of human habitations, man's formal, architectonic division of space—overhead the universal ocean of space and time. Human destinies brought into sharp contrast with naked annihilation.

Space as the eternal, the all-embracing, the all-absorbing.

II

An interpretation of space diametrically opposed to that of the Caligari film may be seen in the light-play "From Morn to Midnight" by Georg Kaiser. Here space is not treated as something concrete and plastic but as something abstract—diffused—immaterial. Light and shadow are not massed, but broken and dissolved.

The original settings are not constructed in the round and in color, but are suggested in the flat in different tones of black and white.

Space does not obtrude; the world becomes a background, vague, inchoate, nebulous. Against this obliterating firmament, this sponge of darkness, the players move, merge into it, emerge out of it. In order that they may not be visually lost, their hands, faces and the outlines of their clothing are relieved by means of high lights carefully applied.

In such surroundings the actor no longer feels the support of active space and a living environment, but is flung back upon his own resources. He is stripped naked of accessories. He even loses much of his own corporeality and relief and becomes two-dimensional, an actual picture.

The universe is flat—a plane—beneath and above it, before it and behind, primeval darkness rules, perspective is engulfed, life and action transpire in a world of breadth and height.

A pawnshop: A rudimentary door in white lighting out of walls that are simply black emptiness. Steps, the relief of which is destroyed by streaks and spots passing athwart both treads and risers. To left and right a jungle-like mass of amorphous odds and ends, pawnshop parapher-

nalia, things that are material but half obliterated and negatived to ghostliness, to mere hints of themselves. The long-haired youth and the long-bearded pawnbroker take on almost the appearance of phantoms.

A staircase hall: Walls, as before of night and nothingness. The balusters, rail and steps in ghostly contours and semi-relief. A luminous clock like a moon in a sky of ink. An electric light, like a ragged giant bullrush or gourd, glows on one wall, in the centre of a burst of painted rays. The corners of the in-leaning invisible walls are demarcated by white hatchings. A youth and a girl in strange attitudes, like figures in a dream. The whole phantasmal and limbo-like—like the spookish banqueting-hall in Strindberg's *"Nach Damaskus."*

The two-dimensional conception was forced to make compromises in several scenes, but even in these the third dimension was effaced and masked as much as possible.

Thus in a Salvation Army hall, the foreground is curtained off in dead black, the middle ground is dazzling white, like plane contrasted with plane. The focus: a cross shining upon a platform, crippled chairs in disarray, crying of a world of want and moral decrepitude.

When depth and distance are rendered necessary in this world of flatness, as on a country road, this too is indicated partly in relief—spectral and infernal trees, a serpentine path, winding among these solitary guardians and losing itself in infinity—a path shadowy and without goal.

The action in "From Morn to Midnight," the settings of which strive to dissolve and negative reality and the outer world, is as harmonious in its way as that in the Caligari film which strives to intensify and animate the fabric of this outer world.

III

Another filmplay, "Algol," the scene of which is laid on the star of that name—a vision of Paul Scheerbart's, the poet-architect—has also been "staged" by Walther Reimann. Here the forms are not broken up expressionistically, but space acts and speaks geometrically, in great vistas, in grandiose architectural culminations. Space or room is divided into formal diapers, patterns, squares, spots and circles, of cube imposed upon cube, of apartment opening into apartment.

One scene represents a stellar landscape of abrupt and fantastic contours, a convulsed, volcanic world, revealing matter in a struggle with

space and time. There are surfaces of snow and silver, spines and crevasses, rounded tumuli of primeval stuff, sharp crags rising like outstretched arms to the stars. A female figure, like a triumphing spirit, and invested with veils of different darknesses, lifts out of the stone. Above her there is spanned arch upon arch of a borealis and swarm upon swarm of stars. A Dantesque vision, the marriage of space and matter. Space in its ultimate juxtaposition with Eternity.

IV

Another interesting treatment of space in the world of the cinema is that devised by Prof. Hans Poelzig and Frl. Moeschke, the designer and the sculptress of Reinhardt's *Grosses Schauspielhaus*. The theme was "*Der Golem*," a fantastic, cabalistic Jewish romance of ancient Prague, by Gustav Meyrink, one of the most imaginative of German writers.

Professor Poelzig conceives of space in plastic terms, in solid concretions congealing under the artist's hand to expressive and organic forms. He works, therefore, in the solid masses of the sculptor and not with the planes and the superficies of the painter. Under his caressing hands

a weird but spontaneous internal architecture, shell-like, cavernous, sombre, has been evolved in simple, flowing lines, instinct with the bizarre spirit of the tale.

These vaults and groins are hoary with an evil age, the mildew of suffering, hunger and prayer is upon them and in them. The gray soul of mediæval Prague has been molded into these eccentric and errant crypts. They suggest a kind of Jewish Gothic—a blending of the flame-like letters of the Jewish alphabet with the leaf-like flame of Gothic tracery.

Poelzig seeks to give an eerie and grotesque suggestiveness to the flights of houses and streets that are to furnish the external setting of this film play. The will of this master architect, animating façades into faces, insists that these houses are to speak in jargon—and gesticulate!

The shadowy ribbon of the light-play, hitherto overladen with photographic fetters, has freed itself from the iron reel and begun to soar upward toward a higher purpose and a nobler expression.

It has spun through the brains of true artists and vitalized itself with an element of creative art.

From this beginning may arise something which will enrichen not only art but life.

If alone our feeling for space be developed æsthetically by the possibilities of the aëroplane, if alone this sixth sense grow subtler and sharper, we shall achieve a finer adjustment of man to his environment, a closer contact with the abstract and concrete worlds, a new harmony with nature and the universe.

Man shall not only know by hypothesis that the world is not flat and still, but feel by sense and instinct that it is round and in flight.

He shall know the Earth as his own house, though he may never have left his hamlet.

The blurred narrow windows of his imagination may then become doorways—wide and always open.

III

A CANDIDATE FOR IMMORTALITY

THE sums of lives, the sums of money, directly engulfed by the war, may be reckoned up tithe and tittle by the inevitable statistician. For every shell, for every tin of beef, for every button there is some account or record—for every pane of glass that gleamed, for every cock that crew in villages that no longer exist. But for that which is more precious even than the lives which we whimper about as priceless,—till diplomats and demagogues by the wars they breed convince us that nothing is more worthless—for the high talents and undeveloped genius swallowed up by Moloch, there is and can be no accounting given. We know that remarkable gifts were destroyed, that countless youths with the glow of glorious promise and achievement upon their brows, went into the fiery furnace and did not return. The list is tragic and long, there has been an eclipse of stars of many magnitudes.

Yet it was among the unknown that the great-

est genius slumbered. Not knowing the nature or extent of our loss, our regret, our grief, is merely hypothetical. But now one of these unknown ones has re-arisen from the grave and speaks. He speaks through the body of the work he has left behind him. A youth, annealed in the fires of an indubitable and transcendent genius, presents his credentials for immortality. He reveals himself to us, forces from us tributes of poignant regret. For all who are able to weigh the worth of the work of the young must recognize in this youth a genius of the first water—a mind preternaturally developed, a spirit magnificently equipped to speak creatively to the world. "One who would have been a second, perhaps greater Goethe, has gone from us," ran the verdict in Germany. We have a mass of astonishing evidence to warrant if not this, at least a very high prophecy. Some of it has recently been published by the father and the friends of Otto Braun in a book entitled, "*Ein Frühvollendeter*" ("One Early Come to Fruition"). It contains extracts from diaries and letters, as well as many poems. Not a line was ever intended for publication.

Otto Braun was the only child of Dr. Heinrich Braun, formerly a Socialist Member of the

Reichstag and editor of "The Annals of Social-Politics and Law," and of Lily Braun, a distinguished German novelist. She was of aristocratic stock, born a von Kretschmann, the daughter of a well-known general. It is said that her family descends from Jérome Napoleon. Her most famous works are "The Memoirs of a Woman Socialist" and "In the Shadow of the Titans." Otto was born in Berlin on June 27, 1897.

The child attended school for only a brief time. The crystalline mind sparkled with such radiance from the very beginning that the ordinary school training, even that of a private institution, would have been an incongruity. He was provided with private tutors and every advantage and influence his wise, gifted and highly-cultured parents considered fruitful or stimulating. They preserved him from all the narrowness of caste and creed. Creative reading, journeys to the Bavarian mountains, to the art cities of Italy, to the Mediterranean, to Paris, stimulating companionship and the full exercise of all mental, spiritual and physical faculties—these were elements in the discipline he underwent.

When the boy was twelve, Prof. J. Petzoldt, of Spandau, who had specialized for many years in the education of highly-gifted youth, petitioned

the Prussian Board of Education for the privilege of release from some of his pedagogic duties in order to devote himself to the intensive education of Otto Braun. The petition was an impressive one, full of reverence and discriminate enthusiasm. It was supported by a strong recommendation by Prof. Wilhelm Ostwald, the famous scientist, and accompanied by various proofs of the wonderful precociousness of the lad. But such things as Ariel-like genius did not fit into the Prussian scheme of things educational. Professor Petzoldt received a curt and negative answer, expressing surprise at his audacious suggestion.

The term "infant prodigy" is not wide nor deep enough to encompass the case of Otto Braun. The child of abnormal or supernormal ability—in music, in chess-playing, in play-acting, in mathematics—is known to all of us. Such amazing gifts are natural, subconscious, instinctive, mysteriously derivative or imitative. The brain is seldom taxed to any great degree, the cerebration is indirect and not deliberate. There is little that is productive or creative. As soon as the consciousness is switched from its one dazzling, concentrated trick or speciality, the mind of the prodigy reverts to that of the ordinary

child. Only once in some long-drawn cycle, after the gestation of many generations of *Massenmenschen*, does nature summon up energy enough to produce the premier genius.

In the case of Otto Braun we have to deal with a human, mental phenomenon, gifted with faculties of a lofty order, with the exalted and the inspirational, and with these strangely mature and developed. These faculties, even during the years of absorption, are productive and independent. They shape judgments and are reinforced by a proud will to freedom from all the reflexes of imparted knowledge. There is no parrot-like repetition of mere reading—there is very little of that mimicry of culture or learning which sustains many a mature man and even many a fixed reputation. The capacity of this young brain, not only for the absorption and digestion of a gigantic mass of knowledge, but for its coördination and fertilization, is balanced by an equally astonishing creative faculty, by an individuality and a style.

A true poet and thinker in a sailor suit and with Fauntleroy locks?—the thought is grotesque, disconcerting, even painful. The normally mature mind is antagonized by this streak of the seraphic. For the sake of its own self-

esteem it is compelled to revolt, to deny, to seek some defense, some point of attack. Shall the youngest generation in the shape of babes, flying banners of indubitable superiority, come knocking at our towers of intellectual pride? Shall we who battle with the years as we crawl slowly to our goals, be overtaken in a day by Admirable Crichtons of children on condor wings? But this fear is groundless even for those in whom glimmers no spark of genius. We have to do here with the lightning of genius and genius of such an order that, as in the case of Chatterton, it seldom strikes twice in the same century.

In 1910 Otto Braun's parents removed to Zehlendorf, one of the farther suburbs of Berlin, where the boy could dream under great oaks and amidst fields and flowers. His training was, however, by no means an exotic one. The healthy animal impulses of boyhood burst through the burden of intellect. He loves to play with tin soldiers. He has heart-wracking love affairs with his flapper friends. He has quarrels and fist-fights with his schoolmates, as we may see in the following passage from a letter written to his mother from the school at Wickersdorf when he was nine:

"Oh! I cannot tell you what unutterable, what tremendous joy possessed me! And why? Because for the first time I felt the blood of my ancestors well up and bubble in my veins, felt my fist clench ready to batter the skulls of my opponents—a most uplifting feeling! Well, I'll tell you all about it! W., this dog, this devil, this twenty-fold Voltaire in character, this embodiment of all intrigues . . ."

In his diary he records his desire to be "earthy, wholly earthy." Even at this age he sees his life, his work and his character before him as a building just begun but already adumbrated by the destiny he feels within him.

I am aware of the difficulty of presenting an adequate idea of this remarkable intelligence by means of a few translated fragments in a short paper—after his father and friends had found the utmost difficulty in making a selection for an entire book out of the wealth of material at their disposal. As gift books for his eleventh birthday he suggests the "Hyperion" of Hölderlin, the Poetics of Aristotle, the Constitution of Athens, Theocritus, and the poems of Hafiz. The impulse to form individual judgments is visible from the very beginning. He has, for example, been playing at parade with his tin soldiers, then taken a walk along the lake, reading "Tristan and

Isolde." "The wonderful tale of Rivalin and Blanchefleur is certainly a bit too sweetish, but it is like Giotto, a golden background for a sombre picture."

Deeply discontented at school, a great change comes over him. He writes to his mother:

"A new religion is necessary; humanity thirsts for this, hungers for it, yet dares not give vent to its longing—out of cowardice. What does the world need most? Love!"

He flings off husk after husk of adolescence, emerges purged, rebellious and introspective from his period of *Sturm und Drang.*

"I am free," he writes in his diary in October, 1908; "I feel it—I am one who lives and creates—creates things that live. I've shaken off all moldy things, all evil and ugliness. I've been raised to a region which gods frequent, I've become otherwise. One phase of my development lies behind me, a phase full of cobwebs and dirt, pearls without, rags within."

The potent energies, the mental and æsthetic forces seething within him, he is able to recognize and evaluate. He is fully conscious of his "dæmon." His intellectual penetration is whetted and polished like a fine blade; it is capable of splitting up illusions, legends and fallacies:

"I prefer Goethe to Schiller," he writes in August, 1909. "Schiller has an idea, and then seeks some vehicle for it (Maria Stuart, Dunois, Carl Moor, Posa, etc.). But Goethe creates human beings and gives us life as it is, not as it should be. A favorite copy-book theme runs thus: 'Why is it that Schiller succeeds in making Wallenstein appear sympathetic to us—in spite of his treason?' I'll tell you: *it is precisely because of his treason.* Wallenstein is one of the five live human beings whom Schiller succeeds in planting upon the stage—that which is human in him is nothing less than his treason. *'Les passions, c'est toute la richesse morale de l'homme'*—I must emphasize this again and again. And yet a man with passions is surely not esteemed noble in the common acceptance of that term. How goes that verse of Pope's which is directed against the repose of the spirit? Unfortunately I can find it only in the French translation:

'Plus notre esprit est fort, plus il faut qu'il agisse. Il meurt dans le repos, il vit dans l'exercise.'"

In the book there is a heliogravure portrait of Otto Braun at the age of twelve. It shows a childish face, round and handsome, with dark, contemplative eyes, a drooping mouth, the expression grave, somewhat proud and defiant. The pose is easy and full of mature assurance: his hands in his pockets, his hair hanging in long locks almost to his shoulders.

"Nietzsche stands on Luther's shoulders, ridiculous as

this may seem. Luther was a man, a daring man, true to his convictions, and I honor him as I honor all heretics, all men who defy fear." (November, 1909.)

Though he had actually little experience with human nature, he is already, possibly through derivative influences, suspicious of it. Full of Machiavellian astuteness is the advice he gives his friend Stefan L., still at school: "Be as close-lipped as possible, yet appear as though built of glass. Do not strive to be the first in class, etc." A deep disdain of the "model youth" speaks out of this sophistication—a certain patronage, his by right, from the following:

"You have brilliant, actually superb ideas, but—pardon the expression—you clothe them in very ornate and deliberately obscure forms. Go, dig down into your innermost self, ask yourself whether you do not often force yourself to adopt forms which are not a true reflection of your inner self. Only the form which comes honestly from within is capable of presenting our thoughts in a worthy shape to others."

May 12, 1910, to his father, from Munich:

"In Rembrandt's works we see everything boil and billow, rave and foam as though arisen out of hell. And what was it he invented as the supreme medium of his expression?—his insane lighting. It is but seldom that he achieves peace and harmony, but when he does they are more than terrestrial."

To his friend Stefan he defends the value of the work of the young men:

"It is in the season of youth that thought ferments. All really great ideas are born in youth. It is true that they emerge bewildered and contradictory, but to mankind will accrue salvation from their fervor and their glorious impetus. True age is something that is not weary, but fresh—a period in which thought is quiet and clarified—and the fabric of the spirit complete."

His adventures among books are so many marvelous discoveries. In August, 1910, this dynamic mind encounters another—Nietzsche's:

"I have read 'Zarathustra.' I am dizzy, breathless, I stagger. I shall not say anything about this book—I cannot. One must be fortified with a rich stock of systematized scholarship, possibly of pedantry, not to be utterly destroyed by such a *non plus ultra*."

"Inexpressible books—these of Nietzsche and Van Gogh—plowshares that sever and tear us up by the roots."

In the spring of 1911 we find Otto in Florence, revelling in a great harvest of Italian art. From his fourteenth to his seventeenth year this eagerness to absorb and master the world grew more and more intense. The boy's soul and spirit expanded: he sat in rigorous judgment upon him-

self. There was something Spartan in the manner in which he disciplined his mind and kept it true to its search of the perfect thought in the perfect form. A deep, religious conviction of his predestined duties in life came upon him.

On July 29, 1911:

"I am slaving prodigiously. Before going to Florence I had time, but no ideas, no thoughts. But now I have thoughts and ideas, but no time. But I prefer this condition to the other. For ideas abide within one, are seizable, even though for the time being they may remain without being executed. But time lies without us—it may therefore be utilized but not preserved."

Again and again we find the lad plunging himself into the world of Greek antiquity, as when he brilliantly debates the antitheses of the Pythagoreans with his friend Otto G. On a voyage homeward bound from Teneriffe in September, 1911, he studies More's "Utopia":

"A most extraordinary work! In the first book a knowledge of economic conditions is revealed, and a judgment upon these conditions, which seem almost incredible. Utopias such as those of Bellamy vanish by comparison into the dusk of insignificance. The astute investigations as to the origin of theft are of particular excellence—he derives it from bad education, poverty, lack of food, high prices of raw materials. In the major

part of 'Utopia' proper, one feels that despite all excellencies, there is much that is too rationalistic, and one is unpleasantly aware of the mechanistic state which has mere wraiths for its units and not real, live human beings. . . ."

The element of imaginative prevision cooled and controlled by common sense was conspicuous in him. It is upon this combination that the higher statesmanship is based, observes this politician of fourteen, in comment upon an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* which expressed the view that the Triple Alliance had outlived itself:

"The conclusion that Germany and Austria are by themselves capable of resisting a combination of all European powers, seems to me to be an error. The argument that this was proved during the annexation of Bosnia, is insufficient, since the Powers did not feel inclined to precipitate a world war merely on account of Bosnia. But I would like (or rather would not like) to see what Germany or Austria would do, if England should paralyze all maritime traffic, if Russia should send us no wheat, the Argentine and other countries no meat, in short, if all connections between us and the rest of the world should be suspended, as would surely come to pass in such a war, and not in a miniature affair such as that between Italy and Turkey."

He compiled a table of exports and imports to prove his point and forecast with remarkable

precision the economic basis of the Revolution, the era of profiteering, etc. The young, intuitive mind was already conscious of voices crying from afar; it registered the brooding troubles of the epoch, felt the latent potencies of the world fever even then developing:

"Surely we are living to-day in an age of transition, in a seeking, questing age, void of all authority, formless, chaotic—yet a wonderful age; not wonderful, it is true, if contemplated as a fixed result from a fixed point of view, but wonderful, unutterably wonderful as something hostile—*something that extorts.* I know of no period in which there are so many new doors to tear open, so much to fight for and about, to create, to destroy and demolish and then to up-build once more, as in this our very own period."

The muddle-headed politics of the rulers of Germany are clear to him, for after a clairvoyant analysis of Germany's political situation (November, 1911), he winds up: "Such are the results of a dish-clout policy which now seems to have become a sacrosanct policy with us."

It was toward the close of 1911 that he flung himself heart and soul into a philosophical-economical enterprise of great compass—"Tyranny and Democracy." In spite of his inner rage and unrest, he is aware that it is well that

one of his age is not forced to evolve too much out of himself:

"It is a sign of weakness to do something merely out of reaction. Ah! To be able to carry a serene balance of stability and perfection in one's soul! But it is terribly difficult to accept influences which are necessary and yet use them only as a means toward the end of shaping one's own being from within, and not to keep on carrying these elements as foreign bodies in one's system, however enthusiastically one may have accepted them at first."

Recorded in his diary in September, 1912:

I believe
More firmly and more imperturbably than any saint,
I believe in my dæmon,
I believe in my duties,
I believe in my task!

Poems pour from his pen, their excellence for the greater part eludes translation. The freedom and radiance of the pagan world wrings from him worship as in the glowing verses "To Aphrodite" and in "Hippolyta":

This is her body, that addresseth,
Clinging, the wind's course, yon and thither swaying,
This is her body, that caresseth,

A birch tree, bending to the syrinx' playing;
And this her body, as it presseth
Close to the charger, like an arrow, her will obeying.

On January 26, 1913:

"This forenoon I read two pamphlets on alcoholism —Gruber and Kräpelin's and Forel's. I am convinced that a physically degenerate age such as ours imposes duties upon us far beyond those of any other, so that the purely sociological aspect of the question forces one to abstinence, since only a small modicum of one's life is lived for one's own self. Were this otherwise, or did we live in a healthy age, I would certainly drink, since this has been done by all great men, and in all great epochs, and since the greatest poets have glorified it in song."

His nature was keenly responsive to the aesthetic, and the world of art reacted upon him potently, productively. In March, 1913, the sixteen-year old boy writes to a friend:

"I have recently occupied myself a great deal with the Renaissance, especially with its architecture. . . . In the closer, deeper contemplation of the splendors of a rhythmically coördinated wall, a well-proportioned window, new and unsurmised beauties arise before us. I also believe that architecture is essentially the masculine art and that its subordination in our age is a particularly clear sign of the effeminization of that age. I also find

that the relation of logic in mathematics to the logic in architecture is of vast importance."

April 4, 1913:

"I've been chasing for more than three hours through the woods with Mister [his dog]. He is an expert at this business and, strange as it may seem, something almost bacchantic overcomes him at such times. There is a wonderful sense of happiness in observing animals and plants in their every detail—how a hare runs, a deer leaps, in short, to relate oneself in this way to the formative processes of nature—for even the mere visualization and realization of things is already one of the lower degrees of the creative."

When he was sixteen Otto wrote a dramatic poem "Eros and Psyche," based upon motifs of Apuleius. Despite its boyish purity and freshness, it is full of a mature beauty and power and a serene assurance of form. He went to Italy once more, where he learned "that a Titan found a place in Michael Angelo's breast, but a God in Leonardo's." In his diary under date of March 17, 1914, we find this note:

"Read a lot of Protagoras. Great and deep things about great men. Yet often I despair of seizing it all. How many of us know the living meaning of these Greek terms? We translate everything into Christian terminology."

The war breaks out. On August 3, 1914, he writes to Julie Vogelstein, his mother's friend:

"Though all things may be veiled and dark, so that we cannot peer into the future, one thing is certain to me: Germany cannot perish. And this faith I base not—as is the habit of our braggarts—upon a belief in our perfections, nor yet upon our achievements, but wholly upon the conviction that as a nation we have not yet fulfilled ourselves. This it is which gives me such assurance. That Germany which we carry in our hearts has not yet taken shape or form. It is possible that in music we may already have sung ourselves out, but in the realms of poetry and architecture and above all in the formation of Life, we have not yet fulfilled our task or destiny. The task that has been imposed upon us is difficult—more difficult than that which confronts other peoples—because we are more diversified and more manifold than they."

The same day he reported himself as a volunteer, but was told that no more were being accepted. On August 4, he went to Berlin with his father. They visited the Reichstag. "The Chancellor," he writes, "looked almost tragic." On August 21st, the birthday of his soldier grandfather, he went to the family vault in the Hasenheide with a great wreath and offered up a prayer:

Since in thy footsteps, forefather, I fare,
Thine eyes be on me and in me thy spirit;
Thy strength be mine in battle, such my prayer:
Bend down to me that this I may inherit.

In September, 1914, Otto Braun, then seventeen years old, departed for the war, "in all hope and expectation—not in a spirit of adventure nor in search of new sensations or new experiences—but rather in the hope and fixed faith that my being will be subdued and made man-like, and that form and content, power and proportion, strength and beauty may come to me in order that I may be prepared for that unconjectured life which will open up before me later on."

The influence of Field Marshal Mackensen, who had been the adjutant of his maternal grandfather, had been enlisted, and through him young Otto had been entered in the 4th Regiment of Jägers for a course of training at Graudenz. He became immensely popular with his comrades, though among his superior officers there were a few martinets who hated him because of the Socialistic faith of his parents and the favor he enjoyed in Mackensen's eyes. His letters are full of enthusiasm over the soldier's life, the bluff *camaraderie*, the life with common men and horses, the wild rides across countryside. De-

cember, 1914, finds him in Poland. He is at once flung into the dirt and primitiveness of the front; he writes letters "crouching in foul barns by the light of candles, whilst the guns bellow and a comrade at my side is searching his dog for fleas."

On January 17 he writes to his parents:

"*This* is the fabulous thing about war-time: it is not only in feeling and in spirit that the simple, the primitive and the elemental hold sway—no, it is in *all* things, down to the most minute. Only now do we realize what house and home really mean, and all the dear, familiar objects of daily use or necessity, *real* necessity. We see to our amazement, as for the first time, the parts of which they are composed when stripped of all ephemeral decoration. This is borne in upon us now—when we are forced to make them for ourselves."

He is eager for action, however, and also anxious to escape from the domineering of the martinets. He asks, therefore, to be transferred to the foremost lines—a resolution which not even the pleas of his parents can alter. As a preliminary step he is removed, again through the influence of Mackensen, to a cavalry corps at Lodz. The frontispiece of the book shows the great brazen helmet of the curassier or guard, incongruously gleaming above the smooth and gravely

girlish face and the gold-broidered uniform—like some mad medley, some incongruous juxtaposition of the primitive warlike and the spiritual cultured. His letters from the field assume a new and deeper note; questions of history, politics, literature occupy him even in the midst of all the turmoil, excitement and fatigue. He devours book after book. A beautiful poem, full of adoration, goes to his mother on her fiftieth birthday. In July, 1915, he writes to his parents:

"I must tell you this. My youth was so splendid and so spacious that I am certain few others could boast of anything resembling it. This I owe to you both. And yet had it not been for this soldier's life, often so hard and grim, my youth might have spoiled my life,—for it was too pure, too good, too immune from all ugly things and from contact with the great masses. Now I believe the balance is restored."

There are countless indications in the literary remains of this young genius which prove clearly that he would have become a great and constructive force in the New Germany, a force that would have impressed its will upon the age. Like a finger pointing out the destiny of America are these words, clear and noble, outweighing all the moralistic shams and sophistries with which

intellectual and political thimble-riggers have bewildered the world:

"We do not know when peace will come, but some day it will surely come, and then the future will belong, not to the victorious or defeated nations, but to that land which will be able to mold peace to its most consummate form, that land which will remain victor in the battle of peace."

He is disgusted with the spirit of shallow religiosity which is making itself felt among the people at home—he regards it as death to the fecundation of the vast and creative future. The world of the trenches swallows him. It is not long before he is made lieutenant. His men adore him, recognizing in him a great spirit, a leader born and bred. He shares all their privations, their joys and sorrows, refusing all special privileges.

It was only after Otto's death that the following impressive incident came to light through the account of a comrade of his. One night when they were in the trenches near Bolimov-Borczymov, there came an order for Lieutenant Braun to take a dozen men and bury the dead in No Man's Land, after first removing the identification disks. The Russian patrols were every-

where. The dead had lain there for weeks, and advanced putrefaction had set in. The men were sickened to their gorges and almost fainted over the horrible task. Otto tried to cheer and encourage them, but to no avail. Then he erected himself to his full height and said, solemnly: "Men! If your minds won't get the best of the decay, the decay will get the best of your minds!" And suddenly he began to chant lines from the Iliad in the original Greek. The sonorous verses, ringing through the night, made a wonderful impression on the soldiers, who worked silently and without faltering as though bound by some heroic spell. Then Otto spoke several of Hölderlin's majestic hymns. A blasé lieutenant remarked: "'Tisn't many of the dead who get a requiem like that!"

His best friend, Lieutenant Boye, is killed before his eyes. He describes the most terrible things with the objectivity and detachment of the trained observer, the master *Dichter*. On August 7, 1916, a telegram summons him home to Zehlendorf-Berlin—his mother is ill. He arrives only to hear that she has just died. "She lay there in august majesty," he writes, "beautiful and serene as Demeter, the Queen of Earth whom she so loved. I do not know what I shall

do—my life is utterly changed—demolished, foredone."

Almost at the same time news arrives that his friend and substitute, Lieutenant Brennfleck, has been killed during his absence. Returning to the front after his mother's funeral, a third blow falls upon him—the tidings of the assassination of the reactionary Austrian Premier Stürgkh by his cousin Fritz Adler, the Socialist idealist—"the only man in apparently rotten Austria," he remarks coldly in his journal, "with enough courage to sacrifice himself."

On November 11, 1916, he writes breezily from the War Hospital at Lemberg, and describes how he was wounded—"a bullet in the left forearm and one above the jaw, emerging close under the eye." He now plunges into the military treatises of von Schlieffen, Gneisenau, Clausewitz, and the histories of von Treitschke—tempered by the Greek poets and many modern writers. His enlightened patriotism does not prevent him from making an acute criticism of various German shortcomings. He comments on the lack of understanding shown by Treitschke for certain unpleasant features of the Prussian nature, features by no means rooted in the superficial. "How does it happen that again and

again we are not only misunderstood, but absolutely hated, and that our most benevolent critics are full of despair after colliding with our edges and corners. We lack the sovereign control of form, something which only an ancient *Kultur* can give." A long and poignant poem in memory of his mother goes to his father from a lazaret at Trebnitz to which he has been removed. The poem is in three parts—"Solace," "Adoration," and "The Pledge." Of the last I have essayed the following translation:

We are alone, my father, and the hours
  Of morning and of evening bring us sadness:
  Terrible are men's steps and their loud gladness,
And faded seems the scent of freshest flowers.

Yet we are here, pent in our bodies drifting,
  She who is now ours wholly, for her sake
  A sacrificial vow to Heaven lifting
That sorrow shall but steel us and not break.

Hers the recurrent victory, daily sure,
  Her spirit stay with us victorious still:
  Though many a decade press upon thy will—
Father, have faith! helping, I will endure!

A long leave of absence is given him to recover from the wounds and the attendant complications. This period he spends at the family home

at Zehlendorf, at Munich, in the Tyrol, and at Copenhagen. With the superb assurance of one who knows his path, his goal and his powers, he writes, in August, 1917:

"This morning First Lieutenant W. told us of R.'s praise of me. These eulogies always arouse a certain distrust in me—a sense of shame. I shall not live outwardly, though I shall live for the world, but not individually sealed and stoppered up. I shall always bear within me an unpolluted spirit and a god whom few know, but who after I am gone, will shine the brighter. I shall have many enemies and experience many attacks during life, but after my death I shall be a symbol and a monument to men—one who will be a *beginning*—one who will have progeny."

Sleepless nights befall him, dreaming of, planning out a great work in three volumes to be called "The State." The first volume is to be devoted to "The History of the Theory of State"; the second, "The History of State Forms to the Beginning of the 19th Century"; the third, "The Development of States During the 19th Century, Their Present Forms and the Necessity of New Forms." National economy lures him—he sees in it a realm full of grand and fruitful tasks.

During November, 1917, a neurosis of the heart is diagnosed in Otto Braun, and he is or-

dered to the mountains, deeply depressed because he cannot return to the front. Once more he revels in the beauty of the world. Writing from Neubeuern:

"This was an indescribably beautiful day. Everywhere in the valleys floated the remnants of flaming clouds, across which the sun performed veritable bacchanals of light. The heavens, on the contrary, were absolutely clear, the woods full of color and rustling sounds and the peaks a glittering white."

At Garmisch in the Bavarian Alps, during a trip on skis:

"One thing has now become clear to me. The supreme goal which man is able to achieve in life is not fame, not happiness, not even greatness; no! not even that which up to now has appeared to me as the greatest of all things—the Great Achievement. It is none of these but this, only this: to become a prototype, a model—one, that through its destiny alone determines the world and humanity."

THE SUPERNAL SERVICE

This be thy law—some god shalt thou surrender
  Thyself and serve him all thy days,
Thy formless life a form to render
  He plucks it from its transient ways.

Think not thou canst with passionate crying,
  Or with a wailing song, persuade
From his pure temple steps replying,
  Him to descend, thy pangs to aid.

His office is not to attend thee
  As doth a mother, simple, wise,
Nor stay the rock that falls to rend thee,
  O fragile one, before his eyes.

Yet hast thou courage, in thyself believing,
  No bitter disillusion shalt thou fear:
Labor shalt thou and grow, at last perceiving
  The perfect Wonder—*when thy god is Here.*

In January, 1918, there is a note in his diary, expressing his joy that he has once more been declared fit for service at the front. He is sent first to the Italian front—the impressions received there result in wonderful letters and records in his journal. He is then transferred to the West Front to take part in what proved to be the last tremendous offensive of the German armies—which began in March, 1918. Yet even amidst this wild and murderous hurly-burly and forward rush, he finds time to read deep and wise books, to think and to set down his thoughts. As, for example, on April 6, 1918:

"This military training is a damned good one for us. And yet I feel that life has many a hard knock in store for me—otherwise nature would never have given me so much inner power to repel all unpleasant things."

Soon afterward he is advanced in the service, attached to one of the staffs, a promotion which does not please him. From his camp at Hallancourt he describes his sensations on beholding the havoc wrought in San Quentin by the bombardments of the Allies:

"Never have I seen desolation so stark and thorough as in the villages in front of our lines. Terribly the cathedral of St. Quentin stretches its shattered head aloft, high above mountains of ruins. From within the skies peer through the roof—the wreckage of which cumbers the floor—solitary buttresses and pillars of the groined vaults lift their pitiful stumps into the air. The fragments of glorious rose windows, the splinters of panes iridescent with color, hang here and there. It is thrice grotesque to see here, where only the eternal seems fit to survive, and where even this seems doomed to perish, the crude, screaming modern frescoing of the choir, a symbol of the new barbarism. The ridiculous painted heavens with their gilded stars still blink down upon one in odd sections, whilst behind them and above them the real heavens bend blue and solemnly over the wreckage of beautifully curving vaults."

His last letter was written to Julie Vogelstein,

at Zehlendorf, from a deep, reinforced cellar at Marcelcave in Northeast France, and closes thus —as with a vision or an apotheosis of a spirit that had reached its fruition?—or of one that stood upon the threshold?

"I am now once more overcome by that very same feeling which possessed me when I last left for the front. It is a feeling as if a great impending change were awaiting me and it is upon me now. It is beautiful—the future is absolutely impenetrable, yet it furnishes a background upon which one can paint all manner of radiant colors and magic landscapes."

On the morning of April 29, 1918, a shell, falling into the cellar at Marcelcave, ended the life of Otto Braun in his twentieth year.

IV

THE MACHINE AS SLAVE AND MASTER

Some day when the fever of our civilization will have burned itself out like a superheated furnace, some clear-eyed Ironist will write the philosophical and social history of the Machine. With the imperturbability of his own theme and yet with a glow of pity at his heart, he will trace the curve of its ever-growing power over the human animal and its destinies.

Intersecting the vertical lines of his chart, he will mark it sweeping and darting upward in jagged and precipitous spurts during the last two centuries—a black lightning streak, or the skyline of a mountain range upon which humanity, like Prometheus, lies helpless in chains and exposed—how nakedly, nakedly!—to itself.

At the lowest end of this grim line we find the stone hatchet and the fire-drill of the primitives; at the uppermost end, salient like some iron tentacle or Tartarean creeper, the complicated enginery of our day, the highly organized

mechanical monsters, productive and destructive, born of our ingenuity and our greed.

Here we see mathematical formulæ and subtle problems in physics and mechanics working themselves out in steel, animated by steam or electricity.

The laws of dynamics are translated into cunning contrivances before our eyes.

With something of the horror that is born of such mystery, we behold the inorganic with its monotonous mimicry of life swamping life itself.

The world before the war was glutted and choked with the rivers of textiles and papyri that streamed from the mechanical loom, the paper-machine and the rotary press.

The tides of industrial production flowed round the world in thick and turgid streams, laden with the spawn and offal of the Machine. These cluttered up the cities, the shops, the homes of men with cheap and usually ugly things, soulless and dehumanized, and of no interest beyond their brief usefulness.

Then, as inevitably foreordained in the strife of the commercial age, came one more puissant than the Machine and its mass production.

This was the grimmest monster of all, a Minotaur among Minotaurs.

It was the great Reducer-to-the-Absurd—the mortar in which a trumpery civilization was well-nigh brayed to dust and ashes.

This Thing spoke as a volcano speaks, in a bloom of rose-red flame and thunder, as it squatted upon its haunches in a market-square and was served by high priests in frock coats.

The great siege Howitzer sat among the flower-beds in the *Place* at Louvain, and spat forth in a beautiful trajectory a huge hulk of steel which crushed and blasted the steel cupolas and ponderous walls of Fort Loncin and its sisters. It seemed for a time the apotheosis of the Mechanistic Age bent upon self-destruction.

But this stabile and monumental brute was to be outdone by another. Soon there came a gigantic fire-belching turtle of riveted armor-plate with men in its belly lumbering across the desert which the science of ballistics had wrought in the heart of Europe.

The Mechanistic Age was full of wonder at its own ingenuity and sang litanies to the inventor of the Tank.

Then the obedient slave machines stood still or rose up and rebelled like so many Sparticides.

Out of the plethoras they had so patiently brought forth there grew a sudden dearth. They

left us in the lurch amidst a want of paper, of woven wares, of many things the modern materialist feels are necessary for existence.

If machines could laugh of themselves the rhythm of their iron joy would run over the world like a wave.

Up to the hour of the World War the Machine had been Baal and Mammon.

Then—clanking, rumbling, whirring out of secret arsenals and hangars—it suddenly revealed itself as Moloch.

The dragons of the Prime had come again and felt snugly at home in a new primeval world of stewing swamp and slime, of rotted corpses and shell-blasted ground soil.

The Machine, which had been a vampire in the social state, draining lives and converting them into wares under its masters, now became a cannibal, devouring human bodies and human works —and its own progeny.

Before the war we were too blind to see that the Thing we had built to serve us had become a Dictator.

The Machine, usurping power, had established its own values and negatived those of man.

What is it that to-day confounds and swallows us up? Society in disintegration?

The proletariat hounded on to self-immolation in the wars, fed with visions of a new dispensation, and at last awakened to consciousness of its own power?

A world famished amidst a rich and productive world?

All these, no doubt, but primarily this: the chaos produced by the collapse of the great international machine or organization—the consequence and the curse of a machine-made civilization—the whole world, and man and life itself as a machine!

But the dumb enginery of the world is itself in confusion worse confounded.

It is sick, and invalid, broken, scrapped, sweated like a slum seamstress.

It is starved for want of food, coal and petrol and oil.

Men, having surrendered the cunning of their hands to the machine and flung the handicrafts to the lost arts, are now more helpless than ever—the victims of the mechanical saprophytes which they had bred to such gigantic dimensions in the jungle of industrialism.

To save civilization and culture from the cult of the machine in the first task of culture and civilization.

The machine is sick, but not moribund. It is gaining its second wind; lowering, it is preparing a new tempo and momentum during this pause of lassitude and exhaustion on the part of its masters.

Already the upper end of the sinister curve of mechanistic development sways backward and forward, porrected like the head of a snake.

The machine aspires. Its will to evolution sweeps and shoots far beyond the evolution of man, the creature transcends the creator.

Behemoth has conquered the earth and the bowels of the earth, his brother Leviathan the sea and the deeps of the sea. And now the Machine has taken to itself wings, has become a pterodactyl.

The tempo of our lives is no longer attuned to whirling wheels, but to flying missiles and projectiles.

Time is lashed furiously through the calendar, distance is destroyed; the planet shrinks.

The Machine cheated us with the lure of flight. It converted itself into a bird, without giving us the freedom or the refuge or the serenity of the bird.

It seems strange that the land where civilization is often synonymous with a grandiose empery

of mechanics, has so far produced no poet nor philosopher nor imaginative draftsman of the Machine. But this is perhaps natural, since the Machine in America—the commercial, the political and financial Machine as well as the material Machine—drains the blood and the marrow from art and the imagination.

In England we have had Kipling's personifications of liners, locomotives and dynamos, and the ingenious mechanical drolleries of W. Heath Robinson. Marinetti, the Futurist, deified and demonized the mechanical. That weird German genius, Alfred Kubin, has revealed in his etchings the malevolence and sinister will of the machine, as he has of houses. The grotesque "Puffing Billys" and antediluvian steamboats of Lyonel Feininger, the gifted expressionist, an American by birth, who is now one of the leaders of the revolutionized Art Academy, the *Staatliche Bauhaus* at Weimar, might have come out of Laputa.

Out of art-impregnated Bavaria in which the æsthetic impulse still glows amidst agrarianism and the wave of industrialism sent southward by the Krupps during the war, comes a new and amazing interpreter of the soul and body of the Machine.

In ten superb lithographic plates dedicated to the gifted inventor of the gyroscope, Dr. Anschütz-Kaempf, Otto Muck has created a litany to modern technics.

Muck's interpretation is largely a benevolent one. Peering behind and beneath the industrial significance and function of the Machine, Muck beholds it as an entity independent of volition, yet actuated by the desire to serve man.

With remarkable clairvoyance this artist has seized upon the soul and essence of the Machine, coaxed it out of the inanimate and invested it with something mystic and monumental.

The weird and unfathomable in the nature of automata is here translated into terms of the semi-human or the animalistic.

These things of iron, steel and steam become genii, awe-inspiring, though obedient to a higher will. They are utilitarian Frankensteins, under the spell of inexorable service—the iron grails in which nature's forces play and seethe for our benefit.

Yet despite their benevolent purpose, there clings to them something of the strangeness, of the eternal alienation of the inorganic to which we ourselves have given a mock life—creations

bred in the shadows between animate and inanimate.

A new dimensional world unfolds itself, a heavy and clanking phantasy takes form upon the lithographic stone.

Muck has not built nor assembled machines in his drawings.

The technician will miss the orthodoxy of construction. But the artist has intuitively wrought in terms of mechanics and striven to express his contrivances in terms of the symbolic and the individual.

The first plate is entitled "The Locomotive." It is a drawing of immense sweep and power, atmospherically akin to Turner's "Rain, Steam and Speed."

A bullet-headed centaur with clenched fists and glistening as with oil, storms along the rails on hoofs of iron—behind him a smoke and whirlwind-stricken sky and the black bulks of the cars, thundering.

"The Traveling Crane" crouches upon its overhead rails against the glass rectangles of a factory roof. It is conceived as a kind of fantastic cat with hanging prehensile forelegs and claws, its tail the electric cable that feeds it with power.

"The Harbor Derricks" are rooted fast in stolid rows along the quay, like grim, bald titans in riveted cuirasses, with enormous baboon-like arms and hook-like hands. With ease and a clockwork-like grandezza they lift huge bales and cases out of the belly of a squat steamer alongside.

A remarkable mixture of the mechanical and the demoniacal is "The Dredger Chain." Stretched in rigid tension in mid-air, the joints of the chain resolve themselves into the interlocked arms and legs of naked slave creatures; their distended planished abdomens into the buckets. There is a strange Japanese air of demonry about this drawing, an optical bewitchment.

"The Steam Hammers," with their crouching, half-human shapes and upraised massy fists, stricken into a terrible rigidity upon their iron plinths, must be regarded as a failure in conception and execution. There is here no cunning amalgamation of the two worlds.

"The Hydraulic Press," with its wet, muscle-swelling ogre squatting upon and pulling down the top plate of the press, with water gage and supply pipe inharmoniously obtrusive, is another forced solution, a violent and repulsive juncture of flesh and iron.

"The Centrifugal Turbine" perches upon its vertical axle, like an Indian god—the fans are the multiple outstretched hands of the figure, whirling feverishly as upon a throne or altar. Here, too, the Machine refused to be coerced by the artist and the result is abortive.

The ignition or "Explosion Motor" must be regarded as the dynamic heart of the modern machine, the arcanum of compressed power. Muck depicts a five-cylindered engine as a row of rigid figures, low-browed, bullet-necked brutes, their torsos kneaded into a mass of distended muscles and sinews, with smooth, tube-like abdomens and legs starkly fixed, all of them shaken by the pother and turmoil within, and tense to the point of eruption. This drawing rushes and quivers with suppressed energies; we seem to hear the panting of the tormented demons of speed.

A pig-like monster with a bloated, globular body leans forward upon iron-toggled knees, hideous, bestial, infernal. From the rounded mouth of his steel sac, as from some neo-Gothic gargoyle, vomits a smooth torrent of incandescent metal whose reflexes play upon his blunt snout and basilisk eyes. The Bessemer retort!

The last plate of the cycle is a sombre votive

offering at the black altars of the Age of Steel.

A smoke-blasted firmament is projected over us like an iron casque or prison vault. In the foreground upon a flat plinth, a cyclopean monster, half mammoth, half oven on formidable, pillar-like legs, uprears against the murk. From its small, evil top, or open throat, it belches up whorl after whorl of smoke, thick as lava or the coils of pythons, writhing in the glare from the inferno in its bowels. Behind this brute in ominous array stand its fellows, snorting and glowing with a portentous life. Blast furnaces!

Here, uplifted out of the welter of gesticulating, twisting, turning, dipping, spewing, lifting, dancing and performing automata, like a cathedral over cottages, we stand face to face with the begetter of them all, the Moloch of the Materialistic and Mechanistic Age.

Over this tremendous vision of gloom and force and fire, there hovers, like the glow of the blast furnace itself, a tragic intimation of the doom to come.

We see grimly foreshadowed a world armored in steel, of nations rigid and bristling with gleaming armaments, of the seas enslaved by bulks and sharks of iron, of the airs obscured by mechanical condors, of a race of troglodytes

weighed down with the chains of an ever-growing industrialism.

It is this sinister element which abides even in the productive or creative machine, which unmasks itself in this final plate of Otto Muck's and flares like a red flag of warning.

The Machine is more and more, man less and less. The latest menace to descend upon us is the high-speed currency-note press, raving without pause day and night in the national printing vault of every capital.

This cruel Machine mocks at and annihilates the very wealth its brothers had helped to produce.

The economics of the world are choked in snowstorms of paper, like mourners at a Chinese funeral.

After the red Saturnalia of blood and bullets, comes this Carnival with its cheerless showers of drab confetti, this mock-money that turns to dust and ashes in our grasp.

The tragic circle of human folly and insanity joins up and ends the war as it began it—with a "scrap of paper."

Is it the autumn of our civilization, as Oswald Spengler declares in his dark but fascinating work, "The Downfall of the Occident"?

Are these oblongs of soiled paper the first driven leaves of this Fall of our Downfall?

In his growing sterility of soul, his worship of foul and false gods, his suicidal manias and his atavistic wars, the Human Being is left almost helpless to the menace of the Machine.

For the thing has learned to reproduce not only itself, but other Machines. The Machine, once the creation of man's hand, will increase and multiply by the magic and magnetic life that seems inherent in it. Unless the civilization to come effect the reconquest and the reënslavement of the Machine, a world of helots will sink into deeper and ever deeper bondage unto the very devices which it had invented to make it free.

V

THE "ABSOLUTE" POEM

To find one's way through the art of German Expressionism is like wandering with whirling brain under the livid glass firmament of some huge conservatory and attempting to label outrageous orchids; or adventuring through some vast machinery hall with a thousand models working and stamping bewilderingly. In this exuberant art, we encounter an individualism no longer arrayed in groups or schools, but cloven sharp and sheer, isolated like so many islands, so many peaks. The encompassing medium, like the sea or the air, is all that artists have in common—the concept of the expressionistic. We collide here with the eternal protestant, with Luthers in art, ideologues, hard-bitten idealists, each—with defiance like a dagger between his teeth—proudly climbing his own Golgotha, Pisgah or Olympus. Some of them are figures of impressive proportions, some of them destined for the heroic: Jaeckel, Waske, Krauskopf, Heck-

endorf, Pechstein, Meltzer, César Klein, Scharff, Kokoschka, Rohlfs, Schmidt-Rottloff, Heckel, Kirchner, and others—all painters. If they have not achieved liberation for art, they have achieved it, each in his own way, for the artist, each for himself. Their works are published in large and beautiful portfolios at enormous prices, in limited editions, and are usually over-subscribed.

The antithesis between Impressionism and Expressionism is not always clear. The Expressionist says: "I will not let the outer world impinge upon me and use me as a recording or interpreting instrument. *I* am the recorder, the interpreter of my own inner feelings, thoughts, moods and emotions; and these I express directly, abstractly, free of the thraldom of the object, unburdened by the material, the thing, or the image of the thing. I paint the thing, as I paint man, from within: I interpret the soul." The Impressionist claims also to interpret the soul. There remain, perhaps, in the last analysis, only the greater intensity and immediacy of Expressionism and the abstraction and ultimate simplification of its terms and media. Objectless art.

Boring and blasting persistently into the cliff of petrified form in every art, German *Expres-*

sionismus has struck a new vein. Gushes forth, naked of all message or meaning, the wellspring of the "absolute" poem. So far, there is but one example of this. It is called "Ango Laïna," and is the work of Rudolf Blümner.

Blümner is one of the leading forces in the movement, or rather the institution of the "Sturm" at Berlin; for institution it has become under the energetic directorship of Herwarth Walden. Before his fiery conversion to Expressionism, Blümner was a well-known actor and reciter of the intellectual school. Since then, he has become the dynamic interpreter and champion of expressionistic art—an uncompromising, impregnable champion, fortified with a plangent voice that is like a tocsin, a torrential pen forever on the offensive, and a face gouged hollow and burned out with the intensity of his æsthetic fanaticism.

"For years," he declares, "I have contented myself with establishing the absolute dramatic or recitative speech, even in connection with the word. I have often declared that, to the creative actor, the words of a poem or a play (*Dichtung*) must prove an obstacle; whilst for the uncreative actor they provide an auxiliary means to the formation of tone. The best actors, to be sure, command their own melodies, but only upon the basis of

words and sentences and only when these have a meaning. Our actors enact a *meaning*. And we give them praise when they enact not merely the meaning of the words, but of the whole. Deprive them of the basis of this meaning and they become dumb, uncreative.

"My own efforts to render an independent creative melody were either doomed to remain futile so long as I confined myself to non-expressionistic poetry, or to lead to a cleavage between my rhythmetized melody and the usually unrhythmic or, at best, metric phases of these earlier poems. It is only expressionistic poetry—that is, the conceptually a-logical but æsthetically logical combination of words which rendered possible a lingual-melodic rhythmetization, leading to a unity."

But expressionistic poetry was still fettered to the word, and every word dragged in its wake a tangled network of fixed or implied meaning, as these lines by Johannes Becher:

> The bathing-master bleats . . . Now lust arbors
> Down from hill to sea. Ruin-land.
> Moon in cypresses spanned high.
> Quicksilvergleams on skullcoasts ivory.

Or in the still more attenuated, skeletonized verse of Kurt Liebmann:

> Thy hair fluffs smiles
> breath velvet
> Thou

kissest at longings silver-threads
claw-stark plaint
to waving light
and
curling
circling
bluest
sigh.

It was Blümner's ambition to compose words or sounds, vowels or consonants, as a painter uses colors or a composer tones. As the fruit of his theories we have "Ango Laïna," an absolute poem, in two voices. The poem is written not for the eye, but rather for the ear, the inner ear. Rendered to the outer ear with all the countless gradations of Blümner's sonorous voice, this absolute poem takes on a tremendous volume, and palpitates with a strange power, music, and inner meaning. You are to read the words or concretions of letters as you would read notes. Even at the risk of disrupting the continuity, I shall quote only a few staves:

Oiai laéla oia ssisialu
Ensúdio trésa súdio mischnumi
Ia lon stuáz
Brorr schjatt
Oiázo tsuigulu

Ua sésa masuó túlú
Ua sésa maschiató toró
Oi séngu gádse andola
Oi ándo séngu
Séngu andola
Oi séngu
Gádse
Ina
Leiola
Kbaó
Sagór
Kadó

Kadó mai tiúsi
Suijo angola

Schu mai sitá ka lio séngu

Ia péndo ála
Péndu siolo

Toró toró
Mengádse gádse se

The cadences fall in a hissing, clattering, rolling liquid stream, then flow in a rhythmic buoyancy. A certain form is audible, a refrain leaps forth again and again. But to the unexpressionistic human ear it might be Hungarian, or Lettish, Esperanto, Ido—or idiocy.

In this attempt to make poetry a pure abstrac-

tion, to lop from its burning quatrefoil of sound, sense, color, and form, all leaves except sound, Blümner believes that he has given it an ethereal freedom, liberated it from the earthen investiture of elements too material or too human. He believes that he has found a vehicle for the expression of the immediate, direct, spontaneous language of the emotions, without the mediation of meaning or the background of association. He has, perhaps, builded better than he knew, but he has builded in a circle—backward and downward. For there where formal, conscious art leaves off, the borders of the primitive begin. The anarchs are at us from every side. We brush against all the aboriginal spectres that move behind the mysteries of speech, the dark and lurking half-bestial, half-devilish ancestors of words, crawling out of the instincts, out of inarticulate sounds, until they take wings and soar into the speech of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe.

In other words, Blümner has reduced an art to a natural function; for until his absolute, abstract poetry be subjected, like music, to definite laws, it is little more than nature. Who among us with thrilling vocal chords and emotions taut as bowstrings in our youth, our boyhood or child-

hood, has not yielded to the natural captivation of sound as a vent for emotion, and chanted such abstract poetry, coining a thousand new words and sounds, speaking a tongue never heard on land or sea, yet nevertheless a natural, human, universal tongue, dictated by the mysterious trinity and affinity between the ear, the heart and the tongue?

In Rudolf Blümner's absolute poetry we are, therefore, still bound to the hints and significances of sound, if not of words—words that burst rocket-like into a luminous spray of a thousand associations. There is scarcely one of these artificial words that can not be given its onomatopœic color or meaning. What does *ango* suggest?—what *läina?*—what *toró?* The syllables stir the pools of memory or association, even to those who are confined to the pool of a single language—they stir even the language puddles of the uncultured with their vocabularies of five hundred well-worn words. And why should most of these arbitrary words of Blümner's end mellifluously with vowels, if not because of the traditional music of italianate vocables?

Thus, every poem in an unknown, exotic language would be absolute poetry to us. Perhaps it *is*, perhaps it *must* be, by virtue of that mystic

force that operates beyond the word and seeks its throne in sound, pulsating from race to race. Both tongue and ear are forever teaching each other or being taught. The plastic, impregnated air about us forms our speech; the newspapers in which we root and wallow deform it. The native soil rumbles and declaims underfoot as at Elsinore or Delphos; and the trembling grains in the tympani of our hearts and brains respond. Ears that have not lost this mystic communion with the mother soil are able to hear coming events cast their echoes before, as one may hear the thunder of the far-off train already murmuring in the rail. Artificial languages that reek of the lamp instead of the soil can take no real root—Volapük, Esperanto, Ido.

But can poetry find a universal form or speech —like music or color? Rudolf Blümner of the "Sturm" declares that he has found it; but has he not rather lost poetry and found merely another form of music? He has closed the doors and shuttered the windows, and left us in the dark with a barbarian chanting in a strange, melodious tongue—incomprehensible to us. We demand sense from speech, if not from sound.

The discoverer or inventor of absolute poetry utters, rather pompously, a warning to those who

would lightly or wantonly imitate without having before them the great rounded form or feeling in themselves—the plastic, Dædalian rhythm. But we need not fear that an impressionistic world will suddenly plunge itself into the Nirvana of absolute, expressionistic poetry. We shall content ourselves with relative poetry and its cumbrous baggage train of words packed with meanings.

But when the impulse is upon us to make a primitive, spontaneous oral music, in which we are at once composer, instrument, theme and conductor, then we may abandon ourselves to some such spontaneous composition, unbridled by anything save the ear. The beauty of sound remains independent of meaning—as when we hear a rich voice singing but not the words sung; or when the nightingale attacks our hearts at night.

Blümner's theory is highly subjective, but it is also rooted in instinct and nature, and so it cannot be dismissed as mere nonsense. It may even develop itself into an art—akin to the dance. But sense is the body of poetry, and we do not wish to disembody it into mere sound, any more than we wish to disembody the flower into mere perfume.

VI

A PÆAN AGAINST THE AGE

AMAZEMENT comes upon me and sometimes a kind of impersonal envy when I see the predominance of poetry in the lists of German publishers. There are firms which publish whole series of the younger and newer poets.

Everywhere in Germany the prices of paper and printing reached Himalayan heights during the war and still higher during the false peace following, and have doomed even many a newspaper to extinction. Yet, notwithstanding this, new volumes of poetry appear day after day, advances and royalties are paid, second to tenth and even higher editions are achieved.

The public reverences, the public buys, the public reads; almost, one might say, the public writes poetry.

The Revolution has unloosed a flood of spiritual energies, hitherto confined within the iron channels of duty or rigid order. Suffering has wrung a lyric cry from the soul of an entire

people. The nation struggles like Laocoön, but at least the sons of Laocoön have not ceased to sing. Contention of every kind to right and left, before and behind, upward and downward, has brought new hatreds into the field, new aspirations and perspectives.

Metaphysical adventurers, *Schwärmers* of the universal have piled up towering Utopias, shimmering with iridescent bubble-domes. And these mirages are the brighter because reared against skies dun and thunder-stuffed above a waste.

If one be to singing born there is an end that shapes one's divinity. In the destinies of nations it comes to pass that this end is sometimes, as in human destinies, the Ultima Thule of despair.

The note of revolt rises sharp, clear and inclement. The poet demands his place in creative politics; he aspires to power in the community.

The lyric passion becomes a flag, a beacon, a torch firing the conflagration of the *Menschheitsgedanken.*

Thus poetry in a mechanistic age becomes an Archimedean lever to wrench the cracking old structures asunder.

A people fatally unskilled in politics, awakens and develops as never before its soaring and dom-

inant passion for high poetry—almost one with its congenital passion for music.

As an observer of phenomena of the spirit, I establish and record these things. They are, to be sure, inaudible and invisible to the casual visitor and to the bulk of newspaper correspondents.

Many significant and dynamic singers have arisen. One is constantly startled by the weight, wealth and power of their song. Genius, gifts, uncommon talents abound—enough to leaven a whole epoch, if not pent within the confines of one language. Here I shall write of only one singer out of this great and variegated legion, and of but one book of his—Johannes Becher and his "Pæan Against the Age," one of twenty-five or more volumes of "*Neue Lyrik*" published by Kurt Wolff of Munich.

Becher as a poet is by no means one of the greater figures, but he is one of the most significant.

This book, like his former book, "To Europe," is a furious reaction against the war, against the civilization that could breed such a war, against the humanity that could breed such a civilization. It is a fierce denunciation of our day and its abor-

tions—a warning of the new doom with which it is pregnant.

Becher would blast the worm-tunneled structure in which a thousand death-watches tick, with his disintegrating lines would

> . . . . create the Peak, chiseling it
> Out of the tougher granite
> Of the rolling peoples. . . .
> Crystal peak, God-Gaurisankar. Love's galaxy.

He came striding forth with an iron harp out of the cataclysmic welter of the war, its draff foul upon him, naked of all illusions, wounded within and without, shaken.

Reversed, rebellious, feeling himself flame- and blood-anointed to be the protagonist of Man the Martyr, he went staggering across the desolation of Europe with flickering eyes fanatically bent upon the goal of reconciliation, upon the reconstruction of a world-soul that was to purge a leprous planet, dwell in it and make it luminous as never before.

He would incite humanity unto rebellion against itself, would lash the herds stewing in low swamps and level prairies of existence to erect themselves, if need be by eruption, into

hills and cliffs. Ah, if they would arouse themselves, only once, into cleansing billows to wash away their own pollutions!

Flame strikes at our eyes from out this book. A stench ascends from it to craze the brains of the gods with the savor of their works. The poems often repel, sometimes they infuriate or sicken.

They are cries from the battlefield, from the cot in the field hospital, from the tumuli of stark and livid corpses whose every wound has become a mouth.

Women appear, saint or strumpet, luminous for a moment like stained-glass figures in churches lost in the typhoon of battle, and blooming against the flames of shell-riddled towns. Nightmares spin phantasmagorias.

The instigators of war feel the rabid, catapulting hatred of this poet; he dooms them to wallow in a hell of mud—himself wallowing in a mud of words, of broken phrases that are like fragments of shells, of single words into which, as though they were bombs, he would compress the energy of pages.

The lines burst with wild ejaculations, with wrenched words, and with an expressionistic fury

that rises above or sinks below the level of coherence.

Kaleidoscopic images, intermingled and overlaid like palimpsests in which the ghosts of erased texts suddenly stare forth in their original blackness! Becher demands an expansive imagination from his readers.

His gorge, his entire soul revolted by the bestialities of the human slaughter-house, he drags forth its horrors in merciless honesty to his own emotions, so that he may infect his audience with the same intense abhorrence.

He would not only draw the curtain, but destroy it. Like the victims of the red martyrdom themselves, his verses writhe with ghastly and gruesome figures, immensely powerful because they are coined or chosen by a true poet, and take on something of his grace.

Tangled entrails, the red pits of wounds, pus that crawls, the sweetish heavy scent of dead bodies, gangrene, fragments of flesh, mire, excrement, blood, sweat, the satanic steel that sings through the air and encysts itself in soft and precious flesh or shears off arms, heads or legs.

A steward of a Banquo's feast to sicken War with his own masterpieces. A Wierz among

poets, but one whose work, unlike that of the Belgian master of the terrible, is the fruit of visions branded upon soul and brain by realities.

He would unravel and annul all the lines which poets have ever written to the glory of war. For the captains and the kings he has but one word:

Down! accursed offal of every zone!
Down! villainous spawn of ages old and new!
Go leap, my poinard verse, into the throats of monsters!
Down, bloodhounds, down! Go crashing, rattling down!

Down! down! before undreamt-of lightning onsets—
Like steam athwart the boiling geysers driven.
Sharp bark the guns. The red bombs bellow—
Ye ravishers, hangmen, killers or kings—down! down!

Carnage rolls up from fields replowed, replanted.
Down with the mixers of venom. With the poisoners of peoples, down!
Gleam, knife! Breast, bare thyself!
Down! down! So our brows may turn once more toward heavens clear and blue.

The lines, turgid, cryptic and convulsed in the original, are rebellious to translation.

It is difficult not to succumb to the power and tremendous momentum of this work, this fanatic, ecstatic song, uplifted from the inferno of the

Great Dying. From it there goes forth a poignant yearning for redemption from this pool of blood and filth, from the gloom and soot of vampirish factory towns, fortresses and prisons, grimmer than those of Piranesi's etchings.

Becher's master dæmon will not let him rest, but hounds him on with this elemental love for the reëstablishment of a new humanity in a new Eden, the meadows of which shall flower the brighter because of the corruption and the human compost—man that was but manure—buried beneath them.

. . . . yet a new day shall broaden, shall shine—
Will Love reconquer where murderous Hatred now hisses;
Will love anoint us with the dew of our brother-kisses—
In the magic cloak of caresses enwrap us, divine?

Becher's earlier work vibrated with a lyric beauty which the expressionism of the war and the Revolution has dissolved into an ever greater anarchy of form. Lines such as his "Children's Crusade" no longer flow from his pen:

Loud sang they down the pathway of the mountains,
A shining flock of many little lambs:
"We have been wakened by the silver voices
Of many birds slain on the nightly meads."

Thin like white flags streamed from their limbs the garments;
They bound a cross out of the stalks of flowers,
Before them psalmed the bells out of the hamlets:
"O that Jerusalem illume the valley!"

"Wolves will devour you in the ancient forests!"
"Nay, us the evil beasts would never harm,
The snow-white Saviour will forever shield us!"

Storm at the Cape shattered the holy ship—
Now giant sharks swing eyes of fire above them—
Eternal lamps that sway above their graves. . . .

In his still further deliquescence and dismemberment of form—as in the "*Vorstrophen*" and the "*Nachstrophen*" of the present volume—Becher explodes in fragments and tatters of phrases. The words become mere stepping-stones in the rushing torrent of his emotion:

Arm-sickles sweep gulch-roadways high!
Head-thistle hiss cloud-sponges. Moon: hole—
How man sways man: Ha! shoreless, ha!
Woman through light turns a dishevelled lap.
Screams cries man! Man! That drumming thunder weaves.

The poem becomes a stenograph—a disarticulated skeleton, helpless with the heresy of ultra-expressionism.

The tragic and terrible are reduced to the ejaculatory, as this in turn is reduced to the grotesque and meaningless—thought and emotion escape as from a sieve.

The profounds of violence and passion in Johannes Becher are still troubled by the concussions of the war, the vortices of the Revolution in whose body germinates the body of that greater Revolution he and his brethren foresee and foretell.

When this tormented volcano shall have voided its mud and lava, we may behold it again with a white cloud above its mouth by day and at night a rose-red glow in which the stars tremble.

VII

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ASPIRATION

It is not the vertical flight of Gothic I mean, driven heavenward on the wings of mediæval ecstasy and prayer. I who was myself an architect in that city of visitations, San Francisco, before the last fire and earthquake, would interpret a new vision to all my former colleagues.

I would preach a new passion in building, the recrudescence, almost violent in its vitality, of the old primitive impulse to build, anchored in nature, glorified by art.

I would proclaim the revival of this instinct in a form almost religious, the clearance of a building site for a new spiritual edifice, the liberation of the great mother of arts from dead forms and petrified canons that have made architecture a sterile art in our age.

Here is a way to free it from brittle archæology and the utilitarian engineering of the commercial spirit, the ant-and-bee complex of the skyscraper, the villainous speculation of the jerry-builder.

From the prostration of his spirit let the Builder arise once more—as Artist and as Poet.

Bruno Taut and his brother Max are practical architects in practical Berlin, trained master builders and technicians, among the most skilled in Germany. The Revolution freed them from schools and orders; they broke old dogmas and new ground.

They felt that the chrysalis of the mechanistic age contained nothing living, that it fettered the builder, his hand and fancy.

In War, that grim Anti-Architect, that supreme Nihilist and Negation, they saw likewise a force that would crush and splinter forms and carapaces that had become rigid with death, and make room for something new and adventurous that throbbed with the pulse of a new era and a fairer dispensation.

Bruno Taut in particular, the constructive dreamer and poet, has evolved an entire new philosophy of building, a new relationship of man to architecture, a new function for it in nature and society.

Architecture is once more to become not only one of the tongues or organs of religion and rhapsody, but a sublimation of that instinct, that will to build which thrills in the blood and bones

of the races and bids them erect simulacra of their souls in their architecture. Out of this configuration is to emerge transfiguration.

The program is vast, but its impracticability for the present generation exists only in its vastness.

It is nothing less than the metamorphosis of the world in which we live.

Building is to be an active instrument in the new order of a free society, a factor for human peace and understanding.

It is to rear a house of happiness and beauty for the peoples.

Frontiers are to be erased, the "tentacular" cities are to be dissolved.

Engineering is to fertilize, architecture to glorify the earth.

The program is continental, even planetary.

But the war with its fury of hatred and destruction has proved that all things might be possible with a fury of love and labor.

The first step in the liberation from the academic was the shattering of alien forms and outlived historical patterns and molds through the disintegrating agency of Expressionism.

This seeks freedom through the obliteration, the

dismemberment and dissolution of the object; it seeks release from the theory of the Thing.

It claims the right of self-determination, so to speak, for vital forms fitted to survive. Absolute art, the abstract emotion, and the abstract thought are to create the forms and vessels of their own life.

In all this, of course, there is menace and danger. One step more and liberation from form drowns in its own chaos.

In Taut's new architectural cosmos there is also a nebulous mystic element, a feverish, occult intoxication arising from the turmoil of the Revolution. One is at first almost revolted by this revolt. Is an architect at work here—or an anarch?

Even upon the paper on which these visions are fixed in color and in charcoal, they melt and blur in the struggle between the idea and the form.

They are spontaneous, inconsequent and sportive—they appear to be the exotic emanations of a nature that teems with form and must bring it forth in endless variety.

But in all this but the luxuriance of an orchid-tangle reared upon the compost of wrecked and rotting art elements?

And yet these visions, for all their ecstasy, are founded upon law and even science, upon a definite philosophy of life and an economic system which must command the attention of those who realize the power of the inspirational, the spontaneous, the dæmonic and prophetic in art and history.

This is more than a flight from the muddy reality of to-day to a world of the romantic and the bizarre.

Bruno Taut's world is modern. It speaks in free iron and steel, in plastic concrete, in walls of glass, in polychrome, in light, in the monumental use of water.

It is architecture applied to the landscape and the planet. It is the spiritualization of the environment. Had Poe extended his "Domain of Arnheim" into the architectural, he would have unlocked some such Utopia of use and beauty.

We have to deal here with a superb gift—a project with many specifications in detail for converting the slum of the world into a palace or a secular cathedral.

The "House Beautiful" is to be something more than a phrase for æsthetes and coteries in the arts and crafts. It is to be elevated and

kept holy as a cosmopolitan imperative—the earth as a goodly dwelling, healthy and airy, a dome, a star of liberty and light.

The edifice is to be one with edification.

In his book "The City Crown," Taut expounds his plans for the creation, the culture of organic cities of the future, the functional parts grouped round a central structure of monumental proportions raised on an eminence—a temple of the people, a cathedral of the communal soul. All the needs of the modern, nay, of the future municipality are considered, and a harmonious entity is projected, developing naturally like a crystal or a flower, instead of morbidly like the industrial cancer.

Then conviction came to Bruno Taut that the modern metropolis was in itself pernicious—that it was necessary to sunder it into groups and guilds, into small communities and isolated estates.

It were better that these constructed atrocities should collapse. Like Jules Méline, he saw that the cities were the abysses of humanity.

When wisdom comes to dwell among men for something longer than an hour or two, the territories of the nations will undergo divisions strange and non-imperialistic and will be arranged

with loving care to suit the need for happiness of an order of society which will be built upon our remains like the Rome of marble upon the Rome of brick.

The visionary drawings in black and white, the colored sketches in the remarkable book called, "The Dissolution of the Cities," with their enthusiastic hand-printed titles, their poetic inscriptions and simple arguments and pleas, all printed from plates on paper of different tints, stun and dazzle by their limitless audacity.

This seems Chinese, Martian, Laputan floriculture. The forms appear capricious, rudimentary—again, the equation of natural forces as in the snow crystal, or in the exquisitely starlike forms of the radiolaria already offered for æsthetic exploitation by Ernst Haeckel in his "Art Forms of Nature." But here, too, the definite goal exists—a regenerated social world with a liberated architecture as a conscious driving and shaping power. This strange work has a text—a chorus of denunciations of cities by famous writers from Rousseau to Whitman.

Man's spirit, reinforced by every technical and mechanical auxiliary, is to reshape the planet, realizing Omar's cry.

What is the earth but one tremendous mass of raw material? Therefore, the earth must become plastic to Man the Master Builder.

Nature even in her greatest manifestations, in the expression of her wildest, most elemental savagery, must succumb to Art.

Earth is to aspire to become a star, to convert herself into a tellurian Heaven.

This is the message of Taut's "Alpine Architecture." In this book he has striven upon the basis of a grandiose conception, to convert the most beautiful regions of the Alps into a "Hymn to the glory of Earth." Of such splendors might Kubla Khan have dreamed.

Cyclopean forces are ready to give birth to cyclopean effects.

Why not the future realization of the impossible dream in natural architecture, like many a dream once thought impossible in science?

Why not air castles in an age which already sees them flying?

Why not the mountain moved by the atom when the force of the atom is finally released?

The great *massifs* of the peaks are to be blasted and ground into colossal crystals or jewels, perhaps with polished or green-planted

facets. Villages in green or rose-red valleys are to take on the shapes of stars and flowers.

Domes of trapezoidal glass are to glitter on heights or in gorges, aflame at night with electric fire ground out by the fettered waterfalls.

Temples are to arise on columns of cast ruby glass. Mountain lakes are to be pent in basins or fall brimming from terraces.

The purpose? None, save Reverence and Beauty.

The price? A tithe of the cost of a third-class war.

The incentive? Joy.

A cosmic harmony soars through this choral architecture and gathers fresh volume and impetus on every level. It rises from (1) the Crystal House to (2) the Architecture of the Hills, (3) Alpine Construction, (4) the Building of the Earth-rind, (5) The Building of the Star. To the clients of this architect much of this, bound as they are by the chains of matter and by the inertia and gravitation of human nature, must remain symbolical.

In his "Builder of Worlds," Bruno Taut has given us an architectural drama, set to symphonic music. It is dedicated to the spirit of Paul

Scheerbart, a dreamer of Dædalian imagination, the author of "*Glas-Architektur.*"

This cosmic drama in terms of architecture is capable of actual production. It is soon to be staged—the wonderful "*Fortuny Horizont*" with its ethereal atmospheric effects, its colored lights and limitless distances, will solve most of the difficulties.

This spectacle attacks us from many angles—through vision, music, human solidarity, form and color, the feeling for space—that sixth sense—working expansively within us, and the imagination unloosed in immensities teeming with the birth and death of form.

The curtain parts.

A stage without floor, ceiling or background furnishes the playground for this drama of form. It is flooded with a vibrant yellow light. Spheral music rings and thrills in a waveless monotone, rising and swelling in intensity as the forms and colors emerge.

The tip of a glorious spire rises from the profounds, a fantastic cathedral front follows, buttresses leap into place as it sways upward, details fly to garner and enrich it like doves homing to their perches.

Rose windows, half-fluid, half-flaming, melt and coalesce in huge kaleidoscopic play.

The great organism lives and gives life.

A titanic portal blooms forth, slides and lurches and shifts.

The façade bursts open like a flower; a torrent of forms gushes forth, these swing and sway into constellations of arches, pendants, groins and airy vaults—iridescent light—bells. This closes, inclines itself, revolves.

Lines and shapes intersect, diagonals dart across, fissures strike like black lightnings; the whole shudders, bends, collapses.

The forms liberate themselves, disintegrate in a rhythmic dance, dissolve to atoms and are reabsorbed into space.

The light changes.

Deep azure-green vibrates. The music recedes to unconjectured distances.

The Void is dark blue and unfathomable.

Stars and planets flash.

Two stars emerge from Chaos, dancing in spiral veils of fire mist. They kiss—one vanishes.

The cathedral star (*Domstern*), shaped like a faery snowflake, glitters and turns, trailing streamers of light.

A meteor sweeps into its centre. The fecund Void glows with a reddish purple.

Descends a rain of leaves and flower forms. The rondure of the Earth rises, a pale, luminous green under violet skies. Thunder. Diluvian rains. A many-banded arc vaults across the firmament.

Summer sunlight.

The green mantle of the earth breaks into blossom; huts and human habitations push forth, tents unfold.

The earth is a garden studded unto the distant horizon with shining homes.

A pæan of joyous Earth music. The voices of children.

The House rises on a hill like a gigantic nosegay, a pyramid of fruits, crystals and grasses.

The Crystal House blazes forth. The stage lamps bathe it in waves of ruby light.

It opens, revealing: the Hall of the Peoples —wonder upon wonder, luminous cascades, fountains of fire, glittering roofs and walls of massive glass, floating spheres of gold and silver.

A revel of dancing and oscillating form, light and color, a climax of solar glory, an architec-

tonic ecstasy, an apotheosis of the aspiration to build!

The whole congeals and crystallizes in towering and triumphant forms!

These are indeed, petrified music-tongues that sing of Truth and Beauty in the language of a living architecture.

The music prolongs itself on a single long-drawn note.

The curtain closes.

It is tragic and significant that these Faust-like visions, this lyric architectural liberation, should manifest themselves in a land which, once bright and slumless, is now full of misery and congestion, a land in which few new homes can be built, where architecture has become an imprisoned art, a long and terrible repression.

Yet it is precisely here that this dream is taking shape in spasmodic, tentative efforts, in obscure corners under incredible difficulties and expense. The materials may be prosaic—concrete, wood, cement, stucco, even *adobe;* but the creative artist stands behind them.

Though still stumbling along the river-beds and moraines, the spirit of Bruno Taut's "Alpine Architecture" is already at work in the construction of communal dwellings in garden spots, in

the reclamation and beautifying of waste moorlands, in the attempt to give a city like gray old Magdeburg, of which Taut has been appointed City Architect, a new face and a new message, until it has been given the name of *Die bunte Stadt*—the vari-colored city.

With pen and pencil, with brush and trowel, this builder is giving voice to the creative and ascendant impulses of his people.

VIII

THE VISIBLE SYMPHONY

THE Director-General of the largest German film concern had just effected a certain amalgamation with a well-known American company, and after a brilliant harangue upon the international significance of the film before a small group of Berlin editors, concluded as follows:

"I believe the function of the German film is to give the American film that which it does not possess—and that is soul."

The fact may not be flattering, but the fact remains. It is furthermore reinforced by the revolt of the cultivated American against his own film banality and by the success of certain German films of high rank in America and England.

The particular cretinism which strove to conceal the original titles of these powerful historical films under crass and trashy abstractions like "Passion" and "Deception," or attempted to hide the country of origin, instead of (with a subtler instinct of *réclame*) exploiting the fact, I shall

leave to be investigated by such honest experts in our mental miscarriages as Mr. Mencken or Mr. Van Wyck Brooks. The nausea of the American over the mass-product of his mammonized film industry, has also been made clear to me by many cuttings referring to the "Dr. Caligari" film which were sent me by friends in America, and by many letters full of malediction against the native product.

It is amusing that but a little while ago the German producers and critics were in great fear lest Germany be overwhelmed and debauched by the avalanche of American Wild West, detective and "pritty gurl" films. This additional punishment was by some Germans philosophically regarded as the inevitable attempt of the victor to impose his *Kultur* upon the vanquished. But history has proved that the vanquished often imposes *his* Kultur upon the victor.

In the biology of nations, America and Germany (and Russia) are young nations—as France and England are old. But Germany has deep adult roots, where we as yet have but infantile or at most juvenile feelers. Germany is also forced and always has been forced by her unfavorable geography, her political history, her poor soil and the harsh fate that has so often be-

fallen her people, to an intensive cultivation or administration of her activities, products and institutions. Her specialized militarism, for example, suitable only for her own needs, has now been blindly adopted by the victors. Her highly trained, rigid but efficient bureaucracy has been imitated by her enemies—though they have actually succeeded in importing only the rigidity.

It is characteristic that in a country which is to-day practically without raw materials of its own, such terms as *Veredelungsprozess* (process of ennoblement—as applied to material) and *Qualitäts-Ware* (quality goods) should be the slogans of manufacturers standing on the brink of an abyss. There are no doubt sound economic reasons for this—if anything be still sound in European economics. This process of *Veredelung* has now been applied to the German film —for a long time poor in quality and negligible in quantity—and strangely enough it has also been applied to the American film as this is known here.

The American film has given certain external values and types to the German film, and this influence has been beneficial, for the German is in general obsessed far more with content and *Stimmung* than with form or action. In his

modern *Lichtspiele* he has now learned to combine all four. The great energy, genius, experience, enterprise and devotion to art which characterize the German theatre were a source of wealth and power which was suddenly placed at the disposal of the German film companies. In the ascendancy of her films Germany is now reaping the reward for the love, care and thoroughness she has lavished upon her theatres generation after generation. The capitalists and film impresarios are also wise enough to leave the production of these light-plays in the hands of accomplished artists and to the appreciation of an art-loving public.

It was inevitable, if only by the sheer, visible preponderance of a quality which no war hatreds or propaganda could obscure, that these German artists should, for example, teach the English and the French how their own history should be filmed.

The German conspiracy against making the world safe for idiocy in the realm of the film has just assumed the form of another daring experiment. It is an attempt to detach the film from all reality and to infuse it with a new æsthetic, sensuous and spiritual content. Here the film soars, if only as a medium, into the realm of

purely abstract art. Through the possibilities —technical, actinic and spatial—presented by the film, we have now attained to the painter of music. This new magician is a young painter —Walter Ruttmann by name. He has given us the true music film, has interpreted the audible in terms of the visible and broken down the barriers or the frontiers between two senses. There has, of course, always been much smuggling and signalling across these frontiers that lie between seeing and hearing.

The jargon of art critics resounds with terms taken from the vocabulary of musicians. That of the musical critics is polychromatic with colors borrowed from the painter's palette. One would think that painters laid on color with a fiddle-bow, that fiddlers played with a mahlstick. Every American schoolboy from eight to eighty will assure you with the air of communicating a fresh and ingenuous discovery that a blind man once thought that red resembled the sound of a trumpet.

Never do I read a review of an American novel without stumbling upon the dull and dun monotony of that favorite word "colorful." Never do I *see* the sickly green mildew upon the American war bacon sold upon barrows in Berlin, N.,

but I seem to *hear* the eloquence of Woodrow Wilson.

Walter Ruttmann is an expressionist artist and to him the film is but a subject thing, a means to an end. He has calmly stuck his brush between the spinning reels of the film ribbon and has said: "Be still. Become my canvas."

Music is the most transcendent and ethereal, the most detached and abstract of all arts—the only true expressionistic art. Ruttmann closed the circle between the expressionistic painter and the musician—who need by no means be expressionistic in the matter of style or technique. The link or bridge he used was color, moving color, piled upon the thin, translucent, inflammable band—that artificial chemical plasma, an interpretative medium of still unfathomed possibilities, an actinic voice, a vision, that soars beyond its mean mechanical or photographic origin,—actually the light-blood of a new art.

Ruttmann's technique in elaborating his visible music was that already, if very primitively, employed in the manufacture of the trick or comic film—the moving cartoon drawn by hand—the true moving *picture* as opposed to the moving photograph. Ruttmann has now produced the moving painting, though in this instance it is an

abstract painting—his expression of another man's symphony. It was necessary to produce thousands upon thousands of drawings, executed with a microscopic accuracy, as well as to insure an exact and faithful registration.

It was then necessary to color these drawings with fixed, graduated or variable colors—a task requiring the most prodigious patience and a kind of sixth sense or mathematical *Raumgefühl*, capable of synchronizing time and movement —*different movements at the same and at different times*—a sort of running application of the theory of relativity.

The celluloid ribbon actually became a canvas to this painter, a magic traveling canvas upon which not only his colors became alive and intensified through the agency of light, but also one upon which his forms became alive and gigantically mobile, through the agencies of magnification and movement.

The music translated into color and form accomplishes its destiny within so-and-so many of the tiny sections of the film ribbon at the tempo decided upon by composer, by painter and by operator. The film, which like the lens once aspired to usurp the prestige accorded to art, is once more reduced to its proper place. It has

now become a medium, a servitor, a carrier of art. Not a form of art, but a function, or a functionary.

Ruttmann's first attempt was, as I have said, in the nature of an illustration rather than a direct creation. His theme was musical Opus I, Symphony in Three Parts—by a composer named Brünning. An interpretation, a paraphrase. This visible symphony was recently performed in Berlin before a small group of artists, musicians and film adepts. Expectancy and skepticism were in the air.

The room faded away. Darkness. A few moments' impressive pause, as though to wash away the last clinging contacts with the external world. The machine began to purr, letters and titles flickered for a moment phosphorescently. Then—the opening notes of the symphony—iridescent atmospheres surcharged with an intense and vibrant light, burned and dissolved upon the screen. These served as backgrounds, melting and flowing into one another—dawnlight and sunburst and twilight, infinite reaches of space, with the caroling blue of morning or the dark saturated stillness of the night sky or with a gray *terror vacui.*

The separate notes and cadences of the sym-

phony darted and floated into these luminous fields, as though the notes of the composition had shaken off their schematic disguises of black dots and lines and broken through the bars of the score and the sound waves of the instruments, and converted themselves into a river of flamboyant color.

Some of the forms these colors assumed were already familiar to us in the restless paintings of the Cubists and Expressionists—triangles, trapezoids, cubes, circles, spirals, squares, disks, crescents, ellipses—all the usual fragmentary and activistic geometry. But here the writhing, shifting, interlacing, interlocking, intersecting elements were fluent and alive, moving to the laws of a definite rhythm and harmony, obedient to an inherent will and impulse.

One suddenly felt or rather saw the laws of Eurhythmy at work, the threefold laws of the architecture of rhythm, the basic rudiments of the music of the spheres according to which all things in the Universe, in life and in art must live and move—

the simple and uniform, thus: — — — —
the regularly alternating, thus: — ⏑ — ⏑
and the irregular, thus: — ⏑ — —

Bubbles and foams of color danced or wal-

lowed across the screen, fountains and jets of light and shadow shot into infinity, waves—great, thundering beachcombers of brilliant sound—came galloping on, heaving, palpitating, rising to a crescendo, throwing off a serpentine of pearls or a thin glittering spray that floated away like some high note, piercing, sustained, ecstatic. Globes and disks of harmonious colors came rolling into the field, some cannoning furiously against others, some buoyant as toy balloons, some kissing or repulsing or merging with one another like white or red blood corpuscles. Triangles sharp as splinters darted across the rushing torrent of forms. Clouds rolled up, spread, dissolved, vanished. Serpents of flame blazed through this pictured music, a colored echo, no doubt, of some dominating note.

From time to time, flickering and wavering in and out, over and under this revel of *Klangfarbe*, or sounding color, the *Leitmotif* appeared in playful, undulant lines, like lightning over a landscape or a golden thread through a tapestry. Then the color equivalents of the strong, clear finale poured themselves like a cataract upon the scene—masses of oblongs and squares fell crashingly, shower upon shower. The silent symphony was over. Was it only an aural-optical

illusion that one's ears seemed to ring with the vibrations of this symphony heard through the eye?

The waves and vibrations of color had been borne along parallel, as it were, with the waves of sound. During the performance an invisible conductor's wand seemed to play upon the screen, rising, falling, hovering, sweeping and circling according to the score of the original composer. The word *Tonsetzer* (tone-setter), which German purists in their war on alien words, use in place of *Komponist*, acquires something of a new meaning in connection with the setter of tonal color.

The painter of music sees music as moving, rhythmical form and color, and hears these again as tones. The expressionist artist seeks, by his abstraction or dissolution or shattering of the visible material world into "substanceless art," to express some thought or emotion. But his paintings remain fixations, crystallizations—movement suggested but not transmitted, often unintelligible, or when vocal, speaking a tongue no one else understands. But once these expressionistic forms become animated by movement, they become clarified with meaning.

Imperfect as these first attempts may still be,

the beauty and power of this symphony of the screen as painted by Walter Ruttmann must move all who come under its spell. And now that a new medium has been found, we are able to salute a new liberation of future possibilities, still unformulated, yet apperceived.

This painted film of music in motion served, as I have already indicated, only as the echo, the shadow of another art. But if we apply the same principles to the original painted masterpiece, what perspectives open before us! Why should not the great masters of the future, painting upon the transparent film (large or small) instead of the opaque canvas, create a moving, instead of a static art? Up to the present all paintings, even the most sublime, have been nothing but still-life pictures. Would a true Corot gain or lose because the trees or the peasants were in motion? Would a portrait by Renoir or Sargent be any less a masterpiece because its eyes lived, its hands lifted or its head turned?

If a new Botticelli were to paint his "Primavera" in real instead of implied progression, would it not bring a new beauty to his picture of dancing nymphs—namely, the dance itself? An historical painting by Menzel or Meissonier would be still a masterpiece, even if in motion,

still a superb creation of style, unique, commanding. Still?—I would say even more so. The means of expression at the disposal of individual genius would, in fact, be augmented by the possibility of painting motion—yet remain true art —to the true artist.

Whistler's barge vanishing in the murk below Battersea Bridge would all the more irresistibly bear our souls with it than in the instant fixed by the artist in his two-dimensional water-color. Extension, which is but another name for Time, would be added to the graphic arts—and also Movement, which is but another name for Life. The ban of the photograph, mobile and immobile, would be broken. The obstacles that lie between this theory and its realization are purely mechanical, in part manual. They have already been conquered in practice.

Among the master painters of the coming generations, not even the most indurated classicist will think it unnatural that he should create moving paintings. Nor would the master artists of the past have thought so had this apparatus been at their disposal. The procession that winds up the spirals of Trajan's column—what is it but an historical film in marble? Many a Byzantine, mediæval or Renaissance mural painting or

mosaic—say the procession of Emperor Justinian and Archbishop Maximilian in San Vitate at Ravenna—might, by the intervention of artist, lens and film, be given the majesty of movement in addition to the majesty of treatment and composition. But these venerable glories may well, or rather may best be left to their inaction, their divine mummihood.

It is for the masters of the present and the future to conquer new worlds, I mean new media. We shall throw them these things—light, life, movement, color, music and the white naked screens or canvases of our receptive souls—as well as many cunning auxiliary engines. And we shall beg them to build in joy; or if build they cannot, then we shall bid them conjure forth —beauty. That—even if we be duped—is an end in itself. And an eternal beginning.

IX

FIGURES OF WAR AND FORCES OF DEATH

MANY a major artist has projected himself beyond the place and the hour and undergone his Gethsemane in an attempt to pierce, to seize and fix the Incommensurable, the Unfathomable of the Great War. But the war was a planetary and historic phenomenon, an epoch fixed upon the pivot of eternity.

It spoke a language no poet had ever heard before.

It spread itself upon canvases vast as continents and it clamored for colors far below and far above the chromatic scale of the painter's palette.

Gray steel, red blood, and orange flame no longer gave a traditional solution.

Baffled, the painter saw even the outer aspects of war elude him by following the advice of the insolent old conqueror—was it not Xerxes?

They dived into the sea like fish; they bur-

rowed into the earth like moles; they soared into the air like birds.

All the elements they made their own, giving a new terror to fire, rarefying themselves even to gas, sublimating themselves into chemistry.

Yet no new Goya arose, no Verestchagin.

No Dürer, no Breughel the elder, not even a Doré appeared to interpret the visible and palpable monsters spawned by the mechanistic age.

Art was ground underfoot by the iron-shod hoofs of Behemoth.

Where was the allegory? What was the symbol? The key?

One master artist has found at least one answer in the simplest of human terms which are also the simplest of art—the naked human figure. He has torn a path through the tangle of the mechanical, penetrated the clouds of the chemical, has freed himself from the obsession of the modern army of multitudes.

He has once more reduced war to the elemental —the naked man and the naked weapon—the Hero and the Sword.

. . . . . .

Alexander Schneider, best known as Sascha Schneider, is a master draftsman, painter, and sculptor famous throughout Central Europe for

the heroic gesture of his art and for his impassioned evangel of athletic beauty.

He has already glorified with great breadth and power all that is left of the virile or the nobly tragic in modern life.

Full of modern subtlety, he has remained uncorroded by modern morbidity.

He has preached the creed of masculine beauty to the rising generation with his pencil.

His allegories of modern sport and athletics have invested these with a fresh Olympian grace. Thus Schneider approached the prodigious task of embodying and reflecting the war in terms of the human body with a certain priestlike devotion to stark truth and beauty.

He approached it from the classic angle without sinking into the archaic, or the academic.

Twenty-four powerful and commanding drawings in crayon and charcoal gloom and lighten out of his handsome album in black and gold—"Figures of War and Forces of Death."

Here the human form becomes both the matter and the mirror of war, the Thing and the Idea.

These sinewy and plastic drawings, these shapes of warriors, women and spectres, stalk,

dance or crawl past our vision, enveloped with a fateful twilight, luminous with the aura of death or shining in the nimbus of a heroism irradiant with swords.

These drawings are timeless.

Yet they express with august beauty and irresistible force all the terror, ruin, exaltation, the despair, self-immolation and courage, the Impotence in face of the Immanent Doom, the Invisible Force, the Vacuous Horror of modern war.

And yet there is nothing neurasthenic nor diseased in this art.

Death, cowled and belaureled and with flying tresses, grinning eye to eye with the golden-helmeted stripling, is no longer *macabre*. He is no longer even hostile, but the concluding sum, the end-goal, the last abiding nakedness beyond the naked flesh and the naked steel.

Had the Greeks not abhorred the skeleton Death, they would have given him some such majesty.

Had the Mediævals not despised the body, they would have thrown it into some such beauty of juxtaposition with its own Ultimate and been free of the grotesque.

Schneider's drawings lie beyond the good and evil of war.

Yet the series is bound to a plan, and this plan is carried out in an unfettered sequence that reflects the course of the Great War.

We are first confronted by a black Shape with stiff plumes rearing over a huge casque, a broad spear and slant phosphorescent eyes burning out of an iron visor. Its hands and feet are armored, its front is hung horribly with human heads—"The War Spectre."

Then follows the "Call to War," a youth standing in a tempest, his black hair blown to horizontal lines—his legs widely stemmed—a shattering blast rolls out of a long, redoubled apocalyptic horn.

"Enthusiasm," a slender stripling with an ecstatic face, waves a thin torch abloom with pale fire.

"The Warrior," erect and at rest, the formidable fighting animal, his dark locks blown to the outline of an eagle's wings expanded, his muscular hands at rest upon the gleaming sword between his legs.

"The Flag," its bars traverse, bright and dark, significantly hiding the head of the bearer, the headless, the heedless one, the Patriot to

whom its will is a flinty imperative, duty, self-sacrifice—the flag-bearer as Flagellant.

"Chaos," a mystic whirl of figures, male and female, interwoven, intermerged, deliquescent.

"Thoughts of Death," a bizarre and forced imagining—a young woman in panic flight, with two skulls embedded in and crowned with her own tresses.

"The War Fury," a Gorgon-headed hag dancing amidst bituminous smoke-drifts, and swinging the heads of her victims like censers.

"Defeat," a crippled sage, must be considered a failure of Schneider's;—"Separation" and "Sorrow" are weak, or at least conventional interpretations.

Schneider's pencil has also sung a pæan to the concept of the Hero.

"Courage" is celebrated in his shining, semi-divine form;—here flesh gleams almost like the marble meant to render the hero immortal.

"The Testing of the Sword" and the "Fighter" are full of Apollonian grace and danger.

"The Onset" shows a lithe and powerful form plunging with tremendous momentum into a thick and livid bank of poison mist.

"The Sword Dance" is ecstatic, and full of prancing defiance.

"The Hero," with steel-filleted brow and breast transfixed by a javelin, ascends serene and inert in an upheaval of light toward some Valhalla.

"The Victor," stern and majestic as Michael the Archangel, vibrates with falchions of pale, streaming fire.

The shadows of doom and slaughter lie thick upon such plates as "The Struggle."

All the reasonless brutality and injustice of war cries out of the Laocoön-like group of the "Warrior in the Clutch of the Overmight."

"The Inexorable" is a cryptic and tortured composition, a brutal form perched upon another which it appears to be hollowing out with a great auger of flame, a symbol of human destiny under the relentlessness of war.

"Death" reveals the Warrior transfigured, laureled and clarified, framed in his narrow sarcophagus.

And at the close there is "Peace"—that Peace that is the child of all wars, Peace the great minus-sign—a black-robed woman weeping, a naked lad with arms outstretched toward the great Unknown—the new generation, perhaps the new sacrifice, eternally recurrent.

Sascha Schneider has created no pictures. He

has not attempted to illustrate the war, nor has he dealt in worn or bloodless allegories.

He has incorporated for us in noble and exalted form the immediate soul of War, its monstrous essences, manifestations and emotions.

An artist's eyes have looked upon the cataclysm of the peoples, the paroxysm of civilization—a civilization which is no longer the master but only the raw material of the forces it has engendered.

In this morphology of War, an artist of uncommon vision has preserved all that deserves to survive in war—the heroic, the nobly tragic.

These elements—like Art which exalts and enshrines them—must not pass away, even though the nations go up like scraps of paper in the holocaust of humanity.

X

THE LAUGHING SYNTHESIS

One of the most amazing works of genius published in any language and in any land—perhaps at any time—is Arno Holz's "*Die Blechschmiede*" ("The Tinsmithy"). It is a world satire and it is almost wholly in verse. One must risk one's neck among the dynamics of elemental natural phenomena to find some appropriate simile for it—the smooth green, glittering column of a vaulting geyser, a rhetorical volcano overflowing with the eloquence of its lava, a laughing maelstrom at kiss with death. Nothing like this work is to be found outside of Aristophanes or Rabelais, or, if we rise to the tragic-historic, the "Dynasts" of Thomas Hardy, a work in which history stalks from story to story in iron sandals.

Arno Holz is one of the most significant of German lyric poets, the founder and leader of a whole school. Though he belongs to a genera-

tion already taking on the mellowness and crystallization of time, he is still in spirit to be numbered among the younger men. Holz's influence had even penetrated here and there into some of the English literary groups or coteries of the '90s. Arthur Symons has dedicated books and poems to him. Holz is a master of finished form, of architectural rhythms, of Attic verse, light only in its music, but packed with matter and formidable with philosophical and historical meaning. Among the best-known works are "The Book of the Age," "Ignorabimus," "Dafnis," and "Phantasus." He was one of the first revolutionaries in the realm of *vers libre*, a destroyer of old forms and the champion of a naturalism which clamored for relentless honesty in art—the world seen nakedly, like truth herself, but through the colored glasses of the lyric artist.

"*Die Blechschmiede*," which has now been given its final form, is a work on which Holz has been polishing and filing for years. A subscription edition was issued in 1917; this new one, issued in 1921, by the Sybillen Verlag, Dresden, is, for the present, "final." A first short draft was published in 1902. The full title is as follows:

THE TINSMITHY
or
the turned-over, churned-over, spurned-over, yearned-over, over-thrown, over-flown
MARVELOUS WASTE-BASKET
whose fateful, spiral, infernal, castaway, done-for snippets miraculously erect themselves,
spectrally form ranks and columns
and suddenly—
hey-presto, the devil take it,
hullabaloo—
grow sound as pins once more,
super-jolly and trebly alive.
A grand
lyric-dramatic, drastic, musical-pictorial, plastic
phantastic, orgiastic
TONE, SCENE
and
WORD MYSTERIUM.
A Pandivinium or, if you like, a Pandæmonium in five monumental
Acts and four cerebral Interludes, in all nine parts, not to say metamorphoses, or even
outrages
according to
the Nine Muses.

The book, laden with such perilous stuff, such sulphurous song and headsman's satire, is almost a tome in size and weight—five hundred and fif-

teen pages of large and spacious format. Holz has dedicated

THIS BOOK
of ultimate,
laughing audacity,
most polished malice,
gayest grace,
most sparkling anger,
and deepest,
profoundest,
healthiest,
most jocund,
clearest,
truest, most hilarious,
not to say most godly,
most mocking wisdom,
to all his future,
corporate,
rationalistic,
Interpreters, Exterpreters,
Exegists, Mediaries,
Cathechists, Experts,
Glossarists, Marginalists
and Commentators.

In the original German most of the nouns and adjectives rhyme and the lilt flies trippingly as a rod along a row of bells. This title page and this dedication strike the note of mad, hurly-

burly exuberance which immediately breaks forth from the book itself, like some door in a silent street suddenly opening on a tumultuous parliament. It is a work of incomparable richness and fecundity, or vitality, screwing itself spirally toward the heights, then bursting in rocket-like climaxes. It bubbles, boils and effervesces, losing itself in wallows of words, satanic and arresting and burlesque words, clogged only by the plethora of them—in cloud-fields of phantasy, in forests of digressions and discussions, all in flashing verse, and linked together by the colored lightnings of the poet's wit.

There are pages that are one blazon of bizarre typography, of philosophical grotesquerie, pages of nouns, pages of single, double, triple and quadruple adjectives, pages of proper names, many of them rhyming with a tinkling, maddening monotony, and marshaled and rigged in strange outlandish designs, making outline patterns on the papers, like skins nailed to a barn door—intended and extended outlines, crosses, spindles, and Christmas trees of text, weird skeletons that cause the eyeball to dance and skip from longest line to shortest word. These chains or textures of words seem to have been torn from dictionary and thesaurus and flung

into the book by handfuls. Yet each is well, often adroitly and subtly, chosen, and causes us to marvel at the richness, flexibility and plastic nature of a language capable of being pulled and molded into so many new and by no means unnatural coinages. We are dazed by a wealth of wit, usually spontaneous, sometimes naïve, coruscating like a cascade of gems down a tinkling chute. Over all rolls a humor, blithe, mocking, ribald, gross, obscene, which sometimes stretches itself and belches in Rabelaisian breadth, then loses and swallows itself in quagmires that seem void and formless yet are packed to the brimming edge with appalling exuberance of life. There is an insolent, yet compelling inevitability about the argument, and the language and the verses bristle with epigrammatic point. And with the exclamation point, no less—if the handsome *fraktur* type of this book was set by hand, an extra large supply of !!!!!!! must have become necessary in the fonts. And the intensity and speed with which the ringing verses and tripping staves are lashed along, cause the book to fume, to foam and to quiver. Steam rises and sweat falls; this book is actually a stage.

In his astonishingly brief foreword of forty-one words to this astonishingly profuse and dif-

fuse work, Holz avows his spiritual kinship with Heine, Rabelais, Cervantes, Swift. He might have added Pope whose ribaldries in the "Dunciad" find a frequent echo here. An index of fifteen solid pages gives us the names, running like ordinary text from left to right, of the Actors, Gods, Voices, Choruses, Allegories, Abstractions, Phantasms, Public Characters, etc.,—names ancient and modern which shoot up like flying fish out of the tumultuous, white-capped currents of the lines.

"The Tinsmithy" is a travesty of human life and history.

One is bidden to imagine a monumental Punch and Judy show on a marble stage, with the towering hermes of the nine muses glittering against the fabulous blue, and hundreds of thousands of spectators stretched and piled in endless consecutive rows of seats. There is a welter of actors who come and go, like the figures on a revolving target. Among the chief and most persistent are the Author, the Gentleman in the Thirties, Apollonius Golgotha, Persons in the Audience, the Stage Manager, Puck, the Gentleman over Fifty, Dafnis, the Poet, One in the Gallery, the Impresario, etc. There are all sorts of adjectival personalities, such as the Comfort-

able-reticent-satisfied-One, the Suspiciously-deliberate-fearsome-One, etc. The acts, interrupted by stormy interludes and prologues, unroll as follows:

Act One: "The Battle of the Skalds, Bards, Minstrels, etc." *Allegro marciale resoluto quasi polifonia pomposa bombastica.*

> In the sweet cerulean marvel
> of our virgin Poesy,
> Prose, our senile mother, plunged
> Her didactic lengthy beak,
> And the daughters of the Olympian
> Are degraded to mere jockies
> By each rascal wight whose paltry
> Badly glued and wheezy lyre
> Hums with but a single gut—

is a bit of blank verse pounded forth by the Pegasus Keeper behind the drawn curtain.

Act Two: "The Modern Walpurgis Night." *Fuga furiosa infernale quasi grottesca lasciva impetuosa. Panorama audacieux satanique.* A Witches' medley, dance and hocus-pocus.

Act Three: "The Isles of the Blest." *Scherzo appasionato grazioso quasi pastorale baccanale erotico.* An earthly Paradise of loves and loving. All the passions of literature, the large and the little, wind their way across the stage,

Diana, Mars and Venus, Dido, Penthesilea, Tanit, Sappho, Tristan and Isolde, Messalina, Paganini, with many moderns, among them Walt Whitman

> . . . . the Yankee and reformer
> Riding a whirling ventilator.

Act Four: "The Harp Hung upon the Drooping Willows by the Waters of Babylon." *Adagio grave divoto quasi lamento amoro lagrimoso.* An accusatory, auto-confessional act, philosophic and melancholic.

Act Five: "The High Court of Judgment. The Symbolic Heroic." *Finale crudele adirato quasi stretta tumultuosa precipitevollissima. Croquis tragique rapide.* The Chorus rallies round the author and chants:

> Pale shimmer the stars, black rears the pine.
> Carry the torch for your brothers in line;
> Think not of the past!
> Think of the cats' eyes sparkling in darkness,
> Think of the beasts that crouch there in starkness!
> The joy was not fast—
> Think not of the past.
> Think of thy sword and its whirring sound,
> And let thy heart not stop
> When on thy fist so clenched and round
> The red sparks drop!

Literary styles, schools and fashions are ridiculed and many a shaft flies toward the well-known and the eminent.

The Color Drunkard, thus:

> The fallow eve sits on her titan steed;
> Within the skies her castles burn and bleed;
> A thousand fires flicker on the flood
> And the black willows drip—with blood.

The Neo-Romantic:

> The moon within the clouds—how vile!
> Though real, what a dearth of style!
> *Au contraire*, see what freshness flushes
> A moon in patent calf galoshes!

Truth, the "Decrinolined One," declaims:

> As Truth I hold thee naked as a rail
> Close to my mirror's shine.
> Thou art a monstrous petrefact,
> A mummified porcupine.

There are fiery discussions that swirl about the German Muse. The public takes an active part in these and in the massacre of the schools. There are attacks and counter-attacks by pundits, critics and creators. Solace is dropped like balm upon the Author by a few faithful adherents, Holz's own followers, who sing:

Exit! End! *Á bas le rideau*!
Others, too, were treated so.
Dante, Cervantes were rich in pains,
Kleist the great blew out his brains;
Bürger?—what had he to choose?
Bobby Burns went down in booze.
All of them knew strife and loss;
Gogol crept and kissed the cross;
Ibsen clung to all his orders;
Strindberg's mind flew o'er its borders;
Cousin Isaac, Sally Cohn
Harried Detlev Liliencron.
Seek not to move us with your growl;
Demand no special wine or fowl.
Curse not when mud is flung your way;
Be glad that you're a wall—and stay.

The final words of the Author (who is also at times the Gentleman over Fifty) are defiantly flung before the tribunal:

I lay this shock-haired Peter book
Here on this green table—look!
Dissolved in awe, my noodle bare is
And bows to all contemporaries.

Though many this same book reveals,
'Tis not a book with seven seals,
Every word and every case
Stands adroitly in its place.

Your goods are damaged, never whole,
The cockroach houses in your soul—
To all your windy moil and wheeze,
I am the Laughing Synthesis!

That is perhaps, the inmost secret of this wild bedlam of a book and the mysticism that partly enwraps it. It is Arno Holz's attempt to compose a Profane Comedy, to reduce all culture, all history, all art and all human society to something that may be brightened and interpreted by the Comic Spirit. A modern Thyrsites in the Temple. History and Mythology deprived of robe, mask and *kothurnus* and reduced to the pitifully human, sometimes to the bestial, the gods made laughable in the toils of the passion with which they have befuddled men, heroes subject to the animalism that whips the earth like a top. A panorama, a peep-show, a circus—a stage on which are focused pitiless, wise and sardonic eyes, the eyes of the disillusioned Holz himself—a kind of lyrical Professor Teufelsdröckh. Into the satiric-scurrilous, the sarcastic-salacious, the exclamatory-invective, the riotous indecency of this or that stave, creeps the low, groaning note of this disillusion at the heart of the poet. Not even the exuber-

ance that overcrows the work, not the intolerable torrential rush of the language, the league-long drawing-out of linked agonies of speech, the bleated amorphisms of incessant refrain and repetition, can dim or tire the blazing, coruscating prose and verse which dazzle the brain as a pile of unset gems the eyes. The lavish learning shown—this, too, is Rabelaisian—there are mountains of allusion, as in Montaigne or Sir Thomas Browne.

No echo of the war rings plangently from "The Tinsmithy," no shot is heard, no streak of poison gas crawls across the scene. Some day this world convulsion may be compressed into a number of scornful quatrains. "The Tinsmithy" is for the greater part untranslatable, a grandiose monstrosity in literature that requires for its full comprehension a soul and a mind drenched in the spirit of the Gothic and shot through with the golden threads of the pagan world. And the spectator who sits down to this gallimaufry of a feast must also be annealed in the crystal furnaces of the Renaissance. He must also be an Ultimate Modern and have swallowed and digested the greater part of the things called Culture and Civilization, and then given them up again in disgust—as one who grows sea-

sick from the pitching deck and the swinging stars. Such meat and wine are too strong for our own literature, but this Gargantuan *magnum opus* stands and sparkles, a cosmic-lyrical boiler factory, the tinny thunder of which is softened by a Loreley-like music that rings above the pother.

XI

ACTIVISTIC ARCHITECTURE

MANY have been the efforts of the architect-creator of our day to form or even to formulate an architecture which might be something greater and truer than the existing anomalies and anachronisms. The old forms of bygone ages and civilizations not only survived as shells and skeletons, but they imposed themselves upon us tyrannically as norms and standards and dominated all architecture with a kind of mock life.

Every building erected according to tradition became a kind of prison in which new forms, births, and possibilities perished. And one of the great failures of our modern civilization became monumentally visible—the inability of our culture to produce a vital architecture, bred of the spirit of our time, a concentration and a crystallization of the soul of an epoch or of a people.

A visitor from ancient ages would be lost amidst our machines and the other products of

our civilization—but our buildings would still be familiar to him—poor copies or bloodless simulacra of his own.

The skyscraper is both an adaptation and an evolution—or rather an aggregation. It is the multiple stratification of the story, a liberation, it is true, but almost wholly in the engineering of altitude, the result of abnormal local and lateral pressure.

It is the forced fruit of financial speculation rather than artistic inspiration—it has nothing in common with the unconscious forces that determine true architecture. In its forms it is still pent within the trammels of tradition. A new liberation, a new reformation becomes necessary if our art of building is not to sink into greater and greater sterility.

There have been signs of a period of transition, of hints and prophecies in the work of such men as Olbrich, van de Velde, Wright, Mackintosh and Poelzig, but the entire mass was still too rigid, too frozen to permit of the efflorescence of a new spirit of building.

Then came the war, the great destroyer of forms—human, national, and cultural. This meant annihilation to much that was already life-

less and soulless. It meant freedom of space and action for new forces, thoughts, and buried aspirations.

The war has thus brought a new vision to many a young architect in Europe. The war performed in spirit what Marinetti the Futurist in a ruthless anarchism of destruction longed to perform in actual deed when he declared war against the palaces and churches of Venice.

Among those aspirants toward a new architecture who proceed most scientifically with the synthesis of new forms, we must reckon Erich Mendelsohn. His inventions and innovations are inspired by a great revolutionary force, by vision, intuition and structural logic. A short time ago he exhibited a number of his designs and models and these aroused intense interest and speculation among the architects of his own land and their foreign colleagues.

The work of this young builder seems to point the way which architectural development will pursue in the future. His break with the past is definite and clear. His creations determine their own forms out of the nature of modern building materials, out of function, use and expediency.

From the clarity and simplicity of their structural organization, the strength and purity of the architectonic will which they display, and the inherent power as expressed in their control of great masses, we obtain the impression that we are face to face with a new conception, a new philosophy of the feeling for space—that sublimated sense all great architects must possess.

Something of the austerity and inevitability of that law which dominates the monuments of the great original epochs of architecture—the Greek temple and the Gothic cathedral—and decrees that these are to be understood only in the light of their constructional conditions, is visible in these new shapes.

This law is simple: the external form is to be conceived merely as flesh and skin in relation to the structure of the skeleton.

Thus the appearance of steel as a new building material was bound to postulate a new method of architectural expression, precisely as the architectural system of direct support and load, the figure T as expressed in classic architecture, and of pillar and vault as expressed in Gothic architecture, brought forth the organic architectural form inherent in the material and the method.

This ought to be a natural and logical conclusion, after we have seen how wonderfully the energies latent in iron have expressed themselves in mechanics, in machinery, in the means of transportation—and in war.

It is chiefly because the possibilities of iron and steel have been exploited in a mechanical instead of in an æsthetic sense (owing to the supremacy of the stationary or the movable machine), that the architect has failed to take advantage of the great opportunities presented to him by this material.

He has been untrue to the very soul of architecture and has confined himself to draping and garnishing first-rate works of engineering with all kinds of nondescript decorative lumber and inconsequentialities.

He has distorted and repressed the freedom and the "reach" of steel by crushing and confining it within the rigid limits of some cubicular scheme or system derived from the past.

It was necessary, as I have said, that this entire world of congealed and petrified tradition be convulsed to its roots—that all human relationships be shaken, strained, and shattered before this fabric could be freed from the bondage of the merely expedient and the calculative, as

well as from the tutelage of decadent efforts at a renaissance of renaissances.

The means by which enlightenment came were brutal, mad, and ruthless, but the Great Cataclysm has proved to us that architecture as a modern art must begin precisely at that point at which the nineteenth century imagined its task had already been completed.

It is significant that Erich Mendelsohn's basic principle of a new language and of a new liberation for architecture came to him shortly before the catastrophe which engulfed the hollow and jerry-built structure of our civilization.

The young architect had already seen some fragments of his visions realized in steel, glass, and concrete, and the music of new forms erect itself into a harmonious system. These anticipations have now been overtaken by the new tendencies and the new aspirations in all fields of intellectual and spiritual activity.

The load in construction was no longer to be directly related to the support or the pillar, but was able to distribute and diffuse itself over great areas, or concentrate itself on small *foci*.

The wall was no longer to be subject to the immutable law of the perpendicular. If the architect chooses to slant a wall outward like a

limb of the V, in order, say, to capture more sunlight, steel and concrete remain loyal to him.

Steel and concrete give men a freedom in architecture almost analogous to that which nature gives to many of her forms.

Thick glass, clear and colored, for roofs or walls or floors, opens up unconjectured vistas of

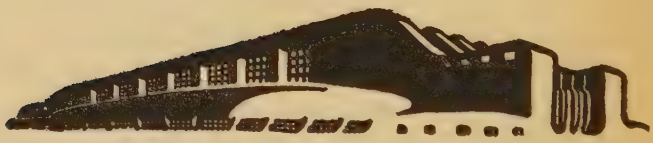

Fig. 1. An Aërodrome

luminosity and crystalline splendor, causing a house to vibrate with light, to unfold like a jewel of many facets, of dynamics and design. "Movement" and mass are given a new significance when contemplated from the viewpoint of Einstein's theory of relativity.

It will prove interesting to analyze a few of these astonishing yet organic structures, most of them industrial.

The Aërodrome (Fig. 1) is the central unit of

a large and comprehensive plant. Here the component forms of the structure are clearly co-ordinated—the airship halls, the hangars, and the workshops. The construction of the central shed reveals a bold and majestic use of the girder, giving a gesture of great liberty and power.

This is an earlier design of Mendelsohn's and discloses an almost puritanic use of material in relation to the skeleton of the building. The building itself seems to resist the accretion of the slightest superfluity.

His later designs, equally grandiose in conception, are based upon a greater compactness, a more rounded and sculpturesque expression—the edifices seem eloquent of an intense and tenacious experience. The central core of the structure or group of structures now rises tower-like; great arches and bays surround it and rivet themselves to the whole or mount like terraces toward the dominant block.

In the structures of the classical historical period, the body or bulk of the building remains entirely passive, dead masses resting in ponderous inertness on their foundations. But in this new architecture—as we may see in the example of the Boxing and Packing Establishment (Fig.

2), the vertical lines and masses impart a kind of driving force or impetus to the separate bulks and give movement to them.

The lines then flow and mount and leap higher

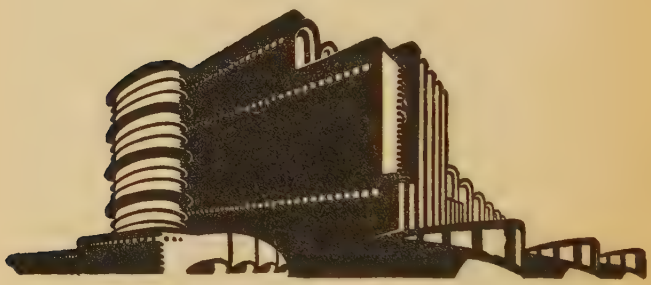

FIG. 2. BOXING AND PACKING ESTABLISHMENT

until the entire complex is given architectural activity and tension—the whole an interplay of bending, rising, superincumbent, and protuberant "tracts."

The architect of the future will not be limited by his material nor cursed by the blight of mere utilitarianism. His phantasy will not be borne down by the weight of huge ashlars nor the breaking point of a stone lintel or a brick arch.

Material is merely a premise, a means whereby the artist may achieve freedom, realize his pur-

pose, and find incentives for ever new audacities.

The architect will proceed in part like the sculptor who has made his model and is about to cast it in bronze or plaster. The architect will

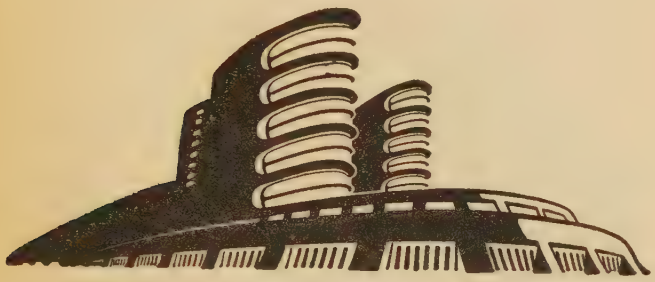

FIG. 3. FACTORY FOR OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS

shape his matrix in ribs of steel and casings of wood and cast the children of his fancy in enduring concrete.

For example the Factory for Optical Instruments (Fig. 3) has become an actual monolith. We have the powerful surrounding base rings of the mounting or assembling shops, the turrets of brilliant glass for the mechanical workshops in which the most delicate instruments are made, the tracts of the staircases and elevators between the turrets, the offices and mailing rooms—the

whole a live organism of concrete, steel and glass, pulsating with the currents of modern industry.

The masses of the walls are no longer fettered to the traditional form of a four-cornered surface —one of the faces of an eight-cornered cube—to be cut up into doors and windows.

No, the walls themselves have become a function; their openings are no longer limited to purposes of light, communication or ventilation. The glass bays of these towers are "gates of light," each an apex, a culmination, a pole to which all the other members are subordinated.

The classic principle of load and support, as has already been pointed out, had for its goal the balance and repose of all the various masses. But in the structure of the future the masses are to overcome gravity and inertia and find their centres or cores of energy within themselves.

The examples shown here have been entirely industrial—but the next step, the creation of the home or the sacerdotal edifice, depends merely upon the creative instinct accepting its inspiration from the message or the purpose of such a building.

It is thus with The House of Friendship, (Fig.

4) a crystalline, polychrome, cathedral-like structure, radiant and luminous.

Great Halls of the People are to rear themselves on city summits or outlying eminences, the

FIG. 4. THE HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP

religion of peace and international understanding is to erect its domes.

Color in masses or in line, broad bands of white or black or gold outlining colored walls or crestings, as well as a studied use of metals, will serve to give a still greater vitality and beauty to the new architecture.

The intuitive element in building plays its part here. The end in view will always produce its

own form if the architectonic instinct be properly experienced, for once form in all its universality has been liberated from the dark secrecies of being and becoming, then all its inflections are but as reflexes of the same creative will that recognizes the law and brings it into play.

It is clear that these examples are but the first tentative efforts toward the materialization of a new architecture. Unconsciously the rococo and the bizarre may still operate in them.

They stand in the same relation to the fully developed or final form that the first automobile or aëroplane bore to its heirs and successors. A pathfinder has found a way out of the architectural *impasse*.

In the accompanying sketches Erich Mendelsohn has merely given visible form of his principles.

These drawings are mere notes, data, fixations of compositions suddenly conceived, not out of the air, but as projections of definite plans. They are abstractions which await their birth in matter.

Owing to the immense difficulties which beset the building trades the projects upon which the young innovator is at present engaged are few,

but in these few his ideas are already emerging triumphantly.

They prove that the artist, the master-builder, is not defunct; that the true creator need only place his ear to the giant heart of the epoch and link himself to the chain of its energies in order to find those forms in which the Age would express itself.

XII

THE DYNAMIC DRAMATIST

GEORG KAISER is a phenomenon, a concentration, a compression of the cultural, industrial and artistic forces of our day. These forces, working first upon and then within him, have now been released, under intense pressure as through a valve, and expanded into a new, authentic and expressionistic form of dramatic art.

This art and the form in which it confronts us, is still so strange, so disturbing, that we overlook the fact that it is the logical resultant, the inevitable evolution of our present-day civilization.

If we place our ears against the latticework of these metallic lines, we shall hear the hum, the vibrations of the engine that drives our epoch onward.

In other words, Kaiser has found a finished dramatic form, a conventional stage speech for our age, or perhaps only for our decade, so noisy, yet so inarticulate.

The plays of Georg Kaiser and the matter and the speech of his plays are so anticipant, so filled

with the spirit of To-morrow, that we forget that they are compact of To-day—that he has precipitated the mountainous materialism, and also the planetary dreams of our epoch—as the prophetic poet crystallizes an age into a play or a poem.

He is so intensely cosmopolitan in his philosophy, so German in the universality of his world ideals, that we—Colossus-of-Rhodes-like—must have our mental feet planted in both hemispheres to be able to realize that this man, this poet with the close-cropped head, sleepy eyes and bored, unintellectual look, has found or rather invented a form of expression, of verbal and dramatic dynamics—which should have been the æsthetic expression and distillation of our own mechanistic American civilization! Here, I say, in the work of this modern European dramatist, America has found its mechanical, its ideological and its idealistic apotheosis. It may not be the America of to-day, but it is America as the antithesis of Europe.

Georg Kaiser is the singer, or rather the artistic exploiter of the Cyclopean forces that exploit the world and human life—money, industry, machines, mechanics and motor energies.

His plays, in their structure and in the ratchet and gear-work of the surcharged dialogue that

drives the action along, have something of the relentless will and directness of machines. But this Magdeburger of forty-six is also the prophet of a great, solar human love, fructifying anew the sandy, sucked-out earth, the smoke-blasted heath of industrialism, into a blessed garden. It is a love that shall convert the slag-heaps of civilization into maternal fields, erasing the sulphurous fogs from the skies, as with a sponge, and letting the gonfalon of a new hope fly there, seeking to convert the fiery world sirocco in which only Cyclops, slaves and salamanders can breathe, into a climate fit for a new race, rejuvenated, regenerated.

He has built up his own shipshape system of ethics, his own moralities, and he has the courage and ruthlessness of his own ideas and his own extraordinary talents. And also intellectual perversities and blind spots.

A short time ago this gifted man, whose plays were acted throughout Germany and in most of the adjoining lands, succumbed to a half-artistic, half-social craving for luxuries even greater than his liberal royalties allowed him. His arrest and arraignment in a Munich court was one of the sensations of Germany. He was charged with having made illegal use of the carpets and

furniture of a handsome villa he had rented at Starnberger See.

With cold, imperturbable consequentiality from his own premises, he set up the thesis that in comparison with the spiritual and æsthetic values, the edification, which he had given the public, nay, the whole world, the disposal of a few rugs or bits of furniture, belonging temporarily to a unit of that public, was absolutely negligible!

The court refused to acknowledge the thesis that because Kaiser had done great work, he was also free to commit petty deeds—and enforced the law, while taking due account of the spirit that should prevail over it, by making the sentence light.

Kaiser has invented and built up, almost as one invents and builds some scientific apparatus, a new technique, a new convention of the modern drama. Some of his early literary origins may be traced to Carl Sternheim, but this world upon which he lifts the curtain is indisputably his own. He has made the genius of the age vocal by finding this dramatic form for him, freed him from matter by giving him this formal prison of art.

He shows us a world of infinite mechanical intricacy, the whole globe one panting organism,

like a factory, transcendently scientific, the whole of mankind divided into masters and serfs, one throbbing, quivering entity of pitiless work—reduced by him to a few shining and singing symbols.

He has broken into the conventional speech and gesture of the stage. His characters, even those of heroic, melodramatic will and dimensions, are puppets in the thrall of huge, overshadowing powers—mobilized machines, world organizations, leagues, industries, trusts.

The Fates and the Pities are grimly, darkly imminent in these dramas—eternal alternations of Salvation and Doom—the human will finding a way out of the *impasse*—to be blocked and thwarted again by human folly. His characters are stripped of the personal and sublimated into types, abstractions of human will, thought or emotion—the Gentleman in White, the Billionaire's Son, the Daughter, Engineer, First Gentleman in Black, Officer, Mother, Workman, Yellow Figure, Blue Figure, etc. Their speech is stripped to the utmost; it is hard and hammered like metal, a skeleton speech. It is the stenography of thought, a telegraphic tongue, signals of mental processes, flashing up from the switchboard of never-resting brains. It is a speech

abrupt, staccato, shorn of every redundancy, often dropping the very articles before the words —intensely packed and compressed with the kernel, the extract of meaning—expressionistic. This sometimes brings about a certain obscurity, so that all the sharp, harsh angles of the language enhalo themselves with a glow of mysticism—like a bar of superheated steel in a rose-red or incandescent aura. And a new music rises from this swift, percussive dialogue.

The gestures are suited to the words. The actors move and gesticulate with abrupt, studied, mechanical, almost marionette-like movements, reminding one at times of the two-dimensional profile figures on Egyptian or Assyrian friezes. Yet these gestures run the gamut of all the passions. They become furious and formidable, stormy as hammer blows, as when the Workmen and Workwomen speak from the iron pulpit in the gloom of the wrecked machine-hall—they became mellow and plastic, as when the Son of the Billionaire delivers his modern Sermon on the Mount amidst a chaos of gigantic concrete slabs like upheaved gravestones—upon the ruins of his work.

Let us take of the sixteen plays which Kaiser has written—among them, "The Burghers of

Calais," "King Cuckold," "The Sorina," "Europa," "From Morn to Midnight," "The Coral," "The Fire in the Opera House," "Hell, Way, Earth"—the most characteristic and best-known, "Gas" (Part I). This strange drama is a sequel to "*Die Koralle*"—a tale of titanic conflicts between the autocratic man of millions, a hero of Napoleonic traits, a masterly criminal, yet capable of unbendable principles and noblest sacrifices, and of his son consumed with an altruistic passion. The dæmon, the *deus* in *machina* of the play, "Gas," is a new chemical invention, a subtle gas with which all the engines of all the world are driven. The climax is a cataclysmic explosion which not only disrupts the great central station, but the whole social fabric.

But mankind will not listen to the voice of the repentant inventor, will not return to a happy pastoral life and let the gas rest, as the altruistic reformer exhorts them to do. The Engineer, the man of action and "progress," triumphs and the world spins once more to the raving tempo of Gas. This desperate and impetuous drama is linked to the destinies of three generations, though each play is rounded in itself. In Part II the Grandson of the Billionaire's Son, the barefooted, rough-clad Billionaire Workman,

leads the forces of labor against Mammon at the close. The red-glass sphere trembles in his hand, ready to be flung amidst the works and convert the gas into poison gas—the one self-devastating weapon left him against the artillery of the besieging powers. A Judgment Day for Humanity. A Yellow Figure in a gas helmet stalks over bleached skeletons—*Dies Iræ*—Resurrection!

Kaiser has also, in collaboration with Karl Jakob Hirsch of the *Volksbühne*, Berlin, devised his scenery in harmony with his play. Here, too, rigidity, stark economy, almost barrenness reign. The first scene of "Gas" (Part I) reveals a vast square white room, the office of the Billionaire's Son. The rear wall is entirely of glass in huge squares. To right and left on the walls are great charts with tables and diagrams in black and white. Two desks, two or three chairs of austere design await the action.

Through the glass wall, in a murky violet light, we see the steep and thronged shapes of great chimney stacks from which flame and smoke pour in straight lines. Faint bursts of music come and go. A young secretary with violent orange hair sits at the smaller desk.

Enters noiselessly the Gentleman in White, a

strange whimsical phantom figure entirely in white, including his chalk-white face. He surveys the room, tiptoes toward the Secretary, touches him upon the shoulder. The following dialogue—which I have permitted to run on to the close of the first act—ensues. Question and answer ricochet back and forth like projectiles. The tempo of the play is at once communicated to the audience, its haste, the brooding, nerve-racking tension of impending disaster:

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Music?

SECRETARY: (*Turns up a startled face.*)

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Listens to sounds from overhead, nods.*) *Valse.*

SECRETARY: How do you happen—?

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Quite casually. A certain noiselessness—achieved by rubber soles. (*Seats himself in chair before desk, crosses legs.*) The Chief?—Busy? Upstairs?

SECRETARY: What do you want?

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: A party—a dance?

SECRETARY: (*In growing haste and confusion.*) There's a wedding—overhead.

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*With pointing finger.*) The Chief—or—?

SECRETARY: The Daughter—and the Officer.

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Then, of course, he can't be seen at present—the Chief?

SECRETARY: We have no chief—here—

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Switching round.*) Interesting! Assuming that you are not too deeply engaged in delicate calculations—the wage schedules there—?

SECRETARY: We have no wage schedules—*here!*

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: That piles up the interest. That touches the core of things. (*Pointing through window.*) This gigantic establishment going full blast —and no Chief—no wage schedules—?

SECRETARY: We work—and we share!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Pointing to wall.*) The diagrams? (*Rising and reading table.*) Three divisions. Up to thirty years, Scale One. Up to forty years, Scale Two. Over forty years, Scale Three. A simple bit of arithmetic. Profit-sharing according to age. (*To* SECRETARY.) An invention of your Chief—who refuses to be a chief?

SECRETARY: Because he does not wish to be richer than others!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Was he ever rich?

SECRETARY: He is the Son of the Billionaire!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Smiling.*) So he advanced to the very periphery of wealth and then returned to its centre—to its core— And you work?

SECRETARY: Every man works to his utmost!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Because you get your share of the total earnings?

SECRETARY: And that's why we work harder here than anywhere else on earth!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: I suppose you produce something worth such an effort?

SECRETARY: Gas!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Blows through his hollowed hand.*)

SECRETARY: (*Excited.*) Haven't you heard of the gas we produce?

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Also shows excitement.*)

SECRETARY: Coal—and water-power are out of date. This new source of energy drives millions of machines at super-speed. We furnish the power. Our gas feeds the industry of the entire world!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*At window.*) Day and night—fire and smoke?

SECRETARY: We have attained the acme of our achievement!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Returning.*) Because poverty is abolished?

SECRETARY: Our intensive efforts create—create!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: Because profits are shared?

SECRETARY: Gas!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: And suppose sometime the gas—should—

SECRETARY: The work must go on—not a moment's pause! We are working for ourselves—not for the pockets of others. No loafing—no strikes. The work goes on without a pause. There will always be gas!

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: And suppose sometime the gas should—explode?

SECRETARY: (*Stares at him.*)

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: What then?

SECRETARY: (*Speechless.*)

GENTLEMAN IN WHITE: (*Breathes the words di-*

rectly into his face.) The White Horror! (*Rising to full height, listening to sounds overhead.*) Music. (*Halting half way to door.*) *Valse.* (*Goes out, silently.*)

SECRETARY: (*In growing consternation, finally seizes telephone, almost screaming.*) The Engineer! (*His eyes dart back and forth between the doors to right and left.*)

[*Enter* ENGINEER *from right, in dress suit.*]

ENGINEER: What—

[*Enter* WORKMAN *from left, greatly excited, in white blouse.*]

SECRETARY: (*Pointing with outstretched arm to* WORKMAN.) There—!

ENGINEER: (*To* WORKMAN.) Are you looking for me?

WORKMAN: (*Surprised.*) I was just coming to report to you.

ENGINEER: (*To* SECRETARY.) But you had already telephoned me!

SECRETARY: Because—

ENGINEER: Did *you* receive a report?

SECRETARY: (*Shakes head, points to* WORKMAN.) This man—

ENGINEER: Has just come.

SECRETARY: —was bound to come!

ENGINEER: (*Somehow disquieted.*) What has happened?

WORKMAN: The gas in the sight-tube shows color.

ENGINEER: Color?

WORKMAN: It is still only a tinge.

ENGINEER: Growing deeper?

WORKMAN: Visibly.

ENGINEER: What color?

WORKMAN: A light rose.

ENGINEER: Are you not mistaken?

WORKMAN: I have been watching it carefully.

ENGINEER: How long?

SECRETARY: (*Impulsively.*) Ten minutes?

WORKMAN: Yes.

ENGINEER: How do *you* know that?

SECRETARY: Wouldn't it be best to ring up—upstairs?

ENGINEER: (*Telephones.*) Engineer. Report from Central Station—sight-tube shows color. I'll inspect personally. (*To* WORKMAN.) Come along. (*Both go out.*)

SECRETARY: (*Suddenly throws up his arms, then runs out screaming.*) We're done for—done for! [*Enter from right,* BILLIONAIRE'S SON—*sixty years old —and* OFFICER *in red uniform.*]

OFFICER: Is there any cause for serious alarm?

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: I am waiting for the Engineer's report. Nevertheless I am glad you are both going. I wanted to say a word about the fortune which my daughter is bringing you. (*Takes a book out of his writing-table.*)

OFFICER: I thank you.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: You need not thank me. It is her mother's money. It ought to be considerable. I have no mind for such things.

OFFICER: An officer is forced—

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Opening book.*) Here is the amount of the funds and where they are deposited. Find an efficient banker and take his advice. It will be necessary.

OFFICER: (*Reads; then speaks in amazement.*) We shall certainly require a banker to manage all this!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Because the capital is a large one? I did not mean it that way.

OFFICER: Please explain.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: What you have now you have for the entire future. You must not expect anything from me. Not now and not later. I shall leave nothing. My principles are sufficiently well known—they must also be familiar to you.

OFFICER: It is not likely that we—

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: No one can tell. As long as money is piled up, money will go lost. Conditions based on money are always uncertain. I feel I must tell you this, so that later on I may feel no responsibility. You have married the daughter of a workman—I am nothing more. I will not conceal from you the fact that I would rather that my daughter's mother had not left her a fortune. But I exercise authority only in my own province, and I never attempt to force anyone into this. Not even my daughter.

[*Enter* DAUGHTER—*in travelling dress—from right.*]

DAUGHTER: Why must we hurry off this way?

OFFICER: (*Kissing her hand.*) How feverish you still are from the dance!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: I should not like the marriage festival to end in a discord. (*They start.*) The danger

can no doubt be averted. But it demands every possible effort.

DAUGHTER: (*At window.*) Below—in the works?

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: I should not find time to say good-bye—later on.

DAUGHTER: Is it so very serious?

OFFICER: Counter-measures have been taken.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Taking* DAUGHTER'S *hand.*) *Bon voyage.* Be happy. To-day you have laid aside my name. That is no loss. I am a man of plain tastes. I cannot approach the splendor of your new name. Must you and all you are be extinguished in me—now that you are going?

DAUGHTER: (*Looks at him questioningly.*)

OFFICER: How can you say such a thing!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: I cannot follow you in your world—a world of fallacies.

DAUGHTER: But I shall return.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: It is not likely that I can wait for a real return. (*Abruptly.*) I shall now ask the guests to leave. (*He kisses her forehead. The* DAUGHTER *stands as if deeply moved. He clasps the* OFFICER'S *hand. The* OFFICER *leads the* DAUGHTER *out.*)

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Telephones.*) Tell the people in the drawing-room that a disturbance at the works necessitates bringing the festivities to a close. It is advisable to leave the vicinity as quickly as possible. (*The music ceases.*)

[*Enter* ENGINEER *from left. A workman's overalls cover his dress suit. He is deeply agitated.*]

ENGINEER: (*Gasping.*) Report from Central Sta-

tion—gas colors deeper every second. In a few minutes —at same rate of progress—it will be—a deep red!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Is anything wrong with the engines?

ENGINEER: All working perfectly!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Any trouble with the ingredients?

ENGINEER: All ingredients, all!—tested before mixing!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Where does the fault lie?

ENGINEER: (*Shaking from top to toe.*) In—the formula!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Your formula—does—not—work out?

ENGINEER: My formula—does not—work out!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Are you sure?

ENGINEER: Yes! Now!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Have you found the mistake?

ENGINEER: No!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Can't you find it?

ENGINEER: The calculation is—correct!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: And yet the sight-tubes show color?

ENGINEER: (*Throws himself into chair before desk —jerks his hand across sheet of paper.*)

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Have the alarms been set going?

ENGINEER: (*Without pausing.*) All the bells are pounding away.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Is there enough time to clear the works?

ENGINEER: The lorries are whizzing from door to door.

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: In good order?

ENGINEER: In perfect order!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*In terrible agitation.*) Will all get out?

ENGINEER: (*Leaping to his feet, standing erect before him.*) I have done my duty—the formula is clear —without a flaw!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Stunned.*) You cannot find the error?

ENGINEER: Nobody can find it. Nobody! No brain could reckon more carefully. I've made the final calculation!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: And it does not work out?

ENGINEER: It works out—and does not work out. We have reached the limit—works out and does not work out. Figures fail us—works out—yet does not work out. The thing sums itself up, and then turns against us—works out and does not work out!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: The gas—?

ENGINEER: It is bleeding in the sight-tube! Flooding past the formula—going red in the sight-glass. Floating out of the formula—taking the bit in its own teeth. I have done my duty. My head is quite clear. The impossible is going to take place—it cannot come —yet it is coming!

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Feeling for a chair.*) We are helpless—delivered up to—

ENGINEER: The explosion!

[*A terrible sibilance tears asunder the silence without.*

A grinding thunder bursts—the smokestacks crack and fall. A silence, empty and smokeless, ensues. The great glass windows rattle into the room in a cascade of fragments.]

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Flattened against the wall—in a toneless voice.*) The earth swayed—

ENGINEER: Pressure of millions of atmospheres—

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: All is silent—a grave.

ENGINEER: Immense radius of devastation—

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: Is any one still alive?

[*The door to left is flung open—a* WORKMAN—*naked—stained by the explosion—totters in.*]

WORKMAN: Report from Shed Eight—Central—white cat bursts—red eyes torn open—yellow mouth gaping—humps up crackling back—grows round—snaps away girders—lifts up roof—bursts—sparks! Sparks! (*Sitting down in the middle of floor and striking about him.*) Chase away the cat—Shoo! Shoo!— Smash her jaws—Shoo! Shoo!— Bury her eyes—they flame—Hammer down her back—hammer it down—thousands of fists! It's swelling, swelling—growing fat—fatter—gas out of every crack—every tube! (*Once more half erecting himself.*) Report from Central—the white cat has—exploded! (*He collapses and lies prone.*)

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Goes to him.*)

WORKMAN: (*Gropes with his hand.*)

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Takes his hand.*)

WORKMAN: (*With a cry.*) Mother! . . . (*Dies.*)

BILLIONAIRE'S SON: (*Bending low above him.*) O man! O mankind!

Thus, in the cosmos of Georg Kaiser, humanity is flung forward—"from catastrophe to catastrophe."

The mechanism is cruel, as he exposes it, yet courage and hope live on.

He knows that no sooner have the volcanoes of civilization and of the dæmonian human heart, oscillating between the poles of the beast and the god, quieted down, than the pathetic, antlike swarms are at it once more, rebuilding busily upon the still hot, quivering slopes of their beloved Ætna and Vesuvius.

In a few years this activistic playwright, this virtuoso of a sublimated sensationalism, has written his own drama of ascent, triumph, downfall and rebirth.

He has achieved a European reputation before which the English and even the French have capitulated. Yet, despite his German traits and message, there is in him, in his style and spirit and technique, the expression, the efflorescence of the American spirit.

But it is the American spirit as this is seen idealized by a European artist, purged of its slag, of the trivial, the cynical and the ephemeral, and given power, voice, direction as an element in art —a higher dispensation than even the vision of

our rhetoric-inebriated political prophets could compass.

Thus Europe sees and exploits in us the things we do not see and cannot express and builds them into a style, an æsthetic convention and a philosophy.

XIII

THE INTENSIVE SHAKESPEARE

JEERS may be shot at Germany's apparently presumptuous claims to "*unser Shakespeare.*" But if a true love of the poet, a love reverent and deeply rooted in the hearts of the entire people, if constant exploitation of the plays and new experiments in production, if translations that pulsate with almost the power and beauty of the originals, give substance to her spiritual claim, something of that claim must be allowed. It is an anomaly, but no less a fact, that the greatest of English poets, neglected and ekeing out a spectral, semi-archæological, literary and tuitional existence in English-speaking countries, reigns—a monarch of poetry in his proper realm, the stage —in another tongue and another land.

An audacious experiment in the production of "Richard III" has been made at the National Theatre in Berlin, under the initiative of its energetic new Director, Leopold Jessner, and his Master of Decorations, Emil Pirchan. Jessner

has turned the stately and academic traditions of the former Theatre Royal inside out and let the winds of the revolution in art blow through the dusty flies. Besides which he is pinched by the lack of means and has made a virtue out of the rigid economy forced upon him.

Ring up the curtain on his new and astonishing production of "Richard III." This grim and gory old tragedy has undergone at his hands a strange stage metamorphosis. We are confronted, sometimes affronted, by an intensification of the play, by a new atmosphere and medium, based upon the dynamics of expressionistic art. The historical becomes abstract, the human focuses itself into the symbolic, the external world fades into an adumbration, space and the scene are reduced to the simplest common denominator. Costumes are resolved into masses of color. The poetry, the characters and the passions remain dominant, but with a treble, a tenfold force and meaning. It is indeed an expressionistic summary, but also a compressionistic one. The forced essence, the quintessence of the play is the thing. This is activist, this is aggressive art.

In this new version, Richard, the black core of these many tortured and rudely severed royal

destinies, was acted by Fritz Kortner, a gifted young actor, one of Jessner's discoveries. He is one who seems born to the part, blest for all such high malefactor's rôles by virtue of his dark and mobile features which he is able to twist into masks of satanic evil, craft and ferocity—a visage out of Tartarus, brightened only by the maleficent glint of basilisk eyes and a smile that seems like the reflex of lightning or the sheen of steel. Bareheaded, this Beelzebub limped through the play, clad in a black gabardine, split at the sides, unredeemed by frill or ruff, a short dagger in his simple belt. And yet it was not merely villainy incarnate that Kortner expressed, but the dæmonic in the human, the relentless obsession, the implacable ambition bent upon realizing itself even though forced to mount rung by rung upon a ladder of corpses.

After Richard has spoken his famous prologue before the curtain, this sweeps aside. A high stone wall is revealed stretching across the entire stage—gray, lowering, dumb, pierced in its centre by a small portal. A second square wall, equally mute and brutal, rises above the first, its face set some distance back from the lower wall, giving a terrace for entrances *en haut*, as, for example, Richard's when communing with the

priests, or for the nobles on their way to execution. Above this second wall, outlining it, glares a narrow framework of sky—crimson, alive with foreboding and imminent murder, the atmosphere of blood in which the whole drama is plunged, the threat of doom that encompasses and oppresses the puppets of the butcher Gloucester.

This bare wall, which has, however, little in common with the naked emptiness and apologetic poverty of the archaic Shakespearean background, repels at first by the pitiless monotony with which our eyes are battered against it scene after scene, with only trifling variations of lighting or minor accessories. But this impregnable, unmoving background soon fixes our attention with the greater force and directness upon the intensified word and the accentuated action. The expressionism of the play forces its tribute from the increased impressionism of the audience. The gray-green wall becomes the world, a fragment of the cosmos, Fate itself, inalienable, eternal.

The royal women give their peculiar note of mourning to the drama. They impress us as norns and sibyls, living monuments of sorrowing wifehood, motherhood and queenhood, upon whom recoils every blow dealt by the ruthless climber as he sweeps aside the human obstacles

that block his path to the throne. These women are like figures out of some biblical tapestry—fates helpless in the snare of a super-fate hounded on by a Luciferian desire. Like a chorus they blow "the horrid deed in every eye;" their threnody went up like a tide of heart-racking poetry and swept across the audience. They wore voluminous black or purple robes devoid of all ornament; they became presences that gave this early tragedy of Shakespeare's something of the august and monumental calm of Æschylus.

Buckingham came striding grandly into the picture, a striking figure of great height, in a blue jerkin and loose hose tied at the ankles, wearing heavy shoes, bareheaded and bare-throated, a noble neck that prophesied the ax. His flaxen hair, save for one dangling Napoleonic lock, was streaked smoothly aside; under it, like clean-cut marble, a face of the proudest aristocratic cast, a foil for the twisted Richard. Buckingham's movements and attitudes were strangely conventionalized and were dominated by a restrained athletic grace and a statuesque immobility. Now his gestures became hieratic as when offering Richard the crown, now he made steps that seemed part of a solemn dance. The open-hearted Hastings was a wandering pyramid of

warmish white, the man, though tall, almost overwhelmed by the tent-like mantle.

The naïveté of the play with its crude, blood-compounded villain and his cynical and bombastic soliloquies, was augmented by the frequent use of prologues—some of them innovations built up on submerged texts of the play. In addition to Richard's opening lines, the dialogue of the murderers, the gossip of the burgesses, the lament of the scrivener and the epilogue of Richmond, were all given in the white misty funnel of the limelight on a small platform before the curtain.

The unbudging wall transformed itself into a dungeon in the Tower, into a tapestry-hung palace wall, a street, a cloister, into the throne room with a tall flight of red steps. Atop these, terrible and triumphant, Richard as King, invested in an enormous cloak of scarlet with a rude and ponderous crown upon his head, burned like Satan amidst a fanfare of trumpets. At his feet, broadening downward to right and left, with hands and faces buried in their vast red robes, crouched the figures of the nobles, like devotees prostrate before an idol. This scene was monumental and unforgettable and rooted up one's inmost emotions. And yet it was an un-

Shakespearean liberty which the producer took with the poet, a setting Asiatic rather than English.

These red steps against the gray wall remained to the end. We accept them as a plain, as the royal tent and bed, as Bosworth Field. So fierce is the emphasis, the compulsion of suggestion through the word, the contrast of the action with its environment—so powerfully does it dominate the mere background, that all incongruity pales.

Richard, shimmering in armor, slumbers in an eerie dimness upon the dark-red expanse of these steps, as in a bed. The spectres are to appear. But we are spared the usual procession of haggard ghastlinesses, the immemorial train of phantoms defiling in the crass, fluttering limelight. Instead of this we are given a masterpiece of suggestion of the gruesome and the unearthly through sound.

Through this haunted gloom there comes a low moaning, a whispering, a groaning, a gibbering, a whirring and a squeaking; cries, ejaculations, curses, direful oracular voices rolling out of another world; clanging chains, heavy footfalls, crashing, plangent, as of some doom advancing nearer and nearer—the whole a spookish symphony that rises and falls, swells and dwindles,

a choral of damned, unhappy yet avenging spirits, that curdles the blood and conjures up the Unimaginable. Appalling is this crescendo of the spectres, a sensation never to be forgotten.

The very colors, the white and the red of the dynasties, marshaled in groups and masses, battle with each other—as though in darkling forecast of the great antithesis of our modern world. The radiant Richmond, stern and serene as an archangel, dawns upon this summit of gloom and death. He is draped, like his men, in a billowing cloak of white—as opposed to the ominous scarlet of Richard and his followers.

"A horse! a horse!" Richard, stripped naked to the waist like a gladiator—what sword sheared off that coat of steel?—what if he should blast us with the aspect of his hump?—half-naked, I say, half-troll, half-king,—Richard comes staggering out upon the terrace above the lower wall, swinging his huge crown like a censer, in the mechanical rhythm of despair, lashed on by the last paroxysms of his Cæsarian mania, his iron will. He stumbles down those steps he mounted to power and glory, a bull gored and at bay; step by step he dances down, lower, nearer to the end that glares lividly on the upraised swords—at every step he seems to drip blood and hatred.

Never was the elemental in Shakespearean drama unloosed with weightier or stormier impact on an audience. Never was there a more intensive concentration of the actor in his act, the speaker in his phrase. Never, despite all flaws, were scenes composed with bolder or surer strokes or cast in greater heat and plasticity. Here dramatic relief merges into the monumental.

This almost fanatical striving for Spartan simplicity of means for the attainment of æsthetic ends, this horror of the merely decorative and the superficial, approaching almost to the point of barrenness, must be recognized as something new in the forms and media of the stage. I seem to hear—something like the fateful din of Jessner's ghosts—the fall of rhythmic hoofs which are destined to trample upon the old property rooms, upon the rotting canvas and pasteboard glories, upon tattered stencils and traditions, so that the dust and the moths go up in clouds—the intensive, purified, expressionistic drama.

A horse! a horse!—and one with wings!

XIV

THE CHROMATIC "OTHELLO"

UNDER those two revolutionaries in the re-creation, resetting and refurbishing of the higher drama, Leopold Jessner and Emil Pirchan, the *Staatstheater* in Berlin proceeds steadily with its program of renovation.

Whenever an old piece is put on anew in this stately stone pile of Meister Schinkel's, the dust flies thick and high about the *Gendarmenmarkt* where the great show-house stands. There is a sound of ripping and tearing, as though mummies were being rudely unwrapped, a rattling hail of brittle shells, husks and carapaces, a fungoid smell of fustiness and dry rot. The wigs and rigs of Themis are being beaten and combed by these two adventurous showmen.

For some time Jessner has been tapping and sounding the Shakespearean cosmos at unexpected spots and angles. Emil Pirchan, his Director of Decorations, with his prism of an eye and his palette of a brain, has been brooding out new

scenes, symbols, costumes and color combinations with gay and ruthless disregard for all aged or academic interpretations, for everything dead, calcined, fossilized and even venerable that has hooked itself with clamp and claw into the body of the living work of art—the saprophytic ivy of the costumer, property master and scene painter.

Nearly always out of this onslaught, this world of dust, shards and splinters, there results—like a bright tulip flaming out of the mold in a forcing-frame—something wearing a new face, and bearing new forms and contours.

The play becomes plastic; it is not only played, but played with; and, as a rule, with great reverence. Errors, of course, are made, the blunders of a taste that is too adventurous, sometimes a cut results in a wound or an excrescence. Sometimes these reformers, hot of heel and hand, snatch from us dear and well-beloved fetishes that have become part of the plays that have become part of us.

In the main, however, these innovations are full of artistic and dramatic values, constructive, creative. They surge and swirl about the central pillar of the work; the poetry remains intact. The poet and the poet's intention are first stripped

of the old habiliments, usually not their own, and then both are set walking and talking in a new garb.

The eternal in the poet is not gainsaid nor coined into theatrical drachmas; his children are given room to breathe and move. The lines are liberated and set pealing in a greater freedom, the enacted characters are flung back upon themselves, driven up to the very source of their being in the dramatist's heart.

To "re-feel" his original intent or inspiration —*that* is the problem. This way, I think, leads directly from the Globe Theatre in Southwark to the *Staatstheater* in the *Gendarmenmarkt*.

The imperishable plasticity of Shakespearean drama also becomes evident in this process. It is like life itself: its inherent saps and forces are ever charged, ever filled afresh from its great central core—those elements that fed and set in motion a thousand commentators, the busy dwarfs that built their jungles about the giant's garden. This vital germ of supreme genius has gone flashing along the chains of time, producing books out of books as by a kind of horrible parthenogenesis.

These renovations carried on at Berlin's former Theatre Royal are, therefore, renewals in the true sense, are re-creation, decrustation; and since

this theatrical reformation is free from any dilettante invasion of the soul, nerves and organs of the great play, it is to be embraced with a gay gratitude. Nor have these "*Neu-Einstudierungen*" and "*Neu-Inszenierungen*" of Shakespeare anything in common with the "revivals" in the manner, or according to the memory, of Beerbohm Tree.

Shakespeare, as we all know, needs no reviving in the land where he is often and affectionately called "*Unser Shakespeare.*" Borne upon this strong, broad, ever-flowing current of a living love and interest among the people, the great plays pulsate with this transfused, translated blood—and thus Germany munificently repays humanity's debt. I believe that even the intense preoccupation with his works, displayed by the German Shakespearean scholars, philologists and anglicists would, despite all pedantry, serve to keep the poet alive.

Another active element which gives shape to these new presentations is the enforced economy laid upon the Director of Decorations. Great stores of precious stuffs are still available from the royal supplies, but no theatre, even one controlled by the State, could afford to purchase all

the costly fabrics made necessary by the older tradition—the historically sumptuous.

Strong and compelling effects are sought by simplest means; and these often produce the richest, most striking results. I have already described the revolutionary "Richard III" as produced at the *Schauspielhaus*. Jessner and Pirchan soon afterward took up "Othello" and scored another success.

Fritz Kortner played the title part in "Othello" as in "Richard III." This actor is of the school and stock of Betterton and Burbage, a massive figure, implying sound peasant blood, with a large and noble head, with oddly truculent and pursed-up features, bright, blank eyes and pouting lips—in short, a superb mask for the Moor. Kortner gave us an heroic, at times primitive, but always poignantly human Othello; a warrior softened by a smoldering golden love, then caught in the pitiless works of the plot—the anvil and butt of the hellish Iago. One saw him and believed in him as a creature crucified upon his own broad magnanimity—the noble-hearted, impulsive, Africanish dupe. One saw, like a thunder cloud creeping across a sunny landscape, his fate approaching, eclipsing for a time

the whiteness of his soul, until this shimmers again in grandeur at the end.

It will prove a brave show to let the pictures of this "Othello" defile before us in curt stage directions. We have bare surfaces and a very barren stage, yet far from empty, for it is thronged with luminous color. Here and there crops forth an architectural hint, a fragment, a motif of the period, a whiff of Venice or of Cyprus. The costumes were not mere masses and changing blots of color, as in "Richard III"—they were simple, yet there was history and even archæology in them.

First Picture: In front of Brabantio's house. Night. Iago in close-fitting poisonous green, a serpentine figure, lithe as a lie. Roderigo, a gilded young *flâneur* of the Venice of that day, all in golden red, a dandified costume, full of preciosity. Their hullabaloo rouses Brabantio, whose house is gradually fetched out of the background by the growing light, and then recedes again as the old Senator in fiery red stalks forth. Othello in a very vocal yellow silk, a fine harmony of brown, bronze and gold, yet bearing in the colors of his robes the symbol of his coming agony. The two groups of hostile armed men—Cassio's and Brabantio's—Pirchan costumed

alike, but with colors inverted—here black and red, there red and black—signifying opposition —hostility.

Second Picture: The Senate. Suggested by two full-bodied white pillars shining against the *Rundhorizont.* Candlelight. The Senators in wallowing robes of cardinal with their backs to the audience. Guards in chain armor. Desdemona in a rose-colored robe. She enters from the back, ascending from below.

Third Picture: A sky-vault flooded with a vibrant yellow. Steps, as to some grandiose quay. Montano in purple, Othello in yellow. The populace in motley enters from below and prostrates itself upon the ground so that its many white, blank visages might not draw the lightning of attention from the big scene.

Fourth Picture; and Fifth: Here Shakespeare plainly says: A hall in the castle. Pirchan hints at a tavern and confronts us with the arch of a drinking-booth at a fair, behung with gaudy ribbons. "War is over"—the herald comes on, half a harlequin. Then the famous drinking-scene, played and sung by toppling figures against an orange-colored glow from some kind of conflagration behind the arch. Then the clown, a true, an almost historical clown of the Renais-

sance, of the *beffa*, an estray from some court, full of pathos, *capriccio* and squeaky, mincing repartee. Then the doleful musicians, plagued by this zany.

Sixth Picture: Shows us a fragment, a hint of the palace, a segment of rounded arcade relieved brilliantly against the luminous background. It is raised upon a broad flight of steps and furnishes a studied and subtle setting for the carefully composed masses of color and the fine Cinquecento attitudes. The Seventh picture is like the sixth; a few details only are changed.

Eighth Picture: Reveals the light of the *Rundhorizont* quenched, throwing into sharp and stereoscopic relief a great curved bench, white as chalk, with the clown perched like a macaw upon its bold volutes. Desdemona still in tender rose, and Emilia, as the older, riper woman, in a deepening and darkening of this color. Othello in a more sinister yellow with a portentous note of black bursts upon this symphony in white, rose and red, a chromatic irruption, restless, discordant, ominous.

Ninth Picture: A single bold column shoots upward from the centre of the stage and vanishes in its zenith. Its entasis or taper is toward the base, an unnatural construction, symbolic of su-

perincumbent doom, of an Atlantean load of impending disaster, of the tottering structure of lives overladen and top-heavy. Lodovico and his attendants appear as *incroyables* and coxcombs of the time. Here a sharp, crying contrast is expressed between the hyper-cultivation of the Venetian world and the more primitive world of the soldier Moor.

Tenth Picture: This breaks soothingly upon us with a dark blue night sky—always this impression of playing upon a mountain-top, always this encompassment by the eternal—puppets projected against the immensities of time and space. A single vast carpet with a Gargantuan silk cushion in the centre of the stage. A kind of lovers' nest, this. Then Othello, infected with the deadly lie, searching the soul of Emilia, his sulphurous imagination here in this very "room" conjuring up monsters against a world of fire—the narrowing walls of the torture chamber in which he writhes—loathing, yet longing to believe in his chimera.

Eleventh Picture: The bed—this, too, is of heroic size; a bed of state, with its canopy climbing up the wall to a dizzy height—a towering, snowy cone, crowned with a baldachin as with a cloud; below, the exaggerated expanse of cover-

let—a field, a battlefield of love and death—the whole dimly suggestive of some great marble sarcophagus—or a hero's tent? Desdemona in voluminous folds of white, is revealed singing her "Willow, willow" song. Before her stands Othello, also in white, half-hidden under a dark blue mantle. This bedchamber scene Jessner, for some reason or other, tears in two, permitting the short scene with the mutual stabbing of Roderigo and Cassio to intervene in the twelfth picture: A fallow greenish night sky hangs threateningly overhead, pierced in its centre by a strange, conventionalized tree (the hidden bed, the form of which carries on through this scene). The action takes place in the murk, in silhouette, softening the drastic features of this episode, leading on to the precipitation of the final tragedy.

In the Thirteenth Picture, the monumental bed once more looms overwhelmingly in the light of the lamp, casting sharp, mystic tracts of shadow on the wall. Now comes the startling innovation which Jessner has made—without apparent dramatic or æsthetic reason. Was this a capitulation to modern erotics, to the popularity of the French bedroom farce? It would be difficult to imagine Jessner succumbing to such bait. At all events, here, like two marble figures upon a cathe-

dral tomb, are Othello and Desdemona lying side by side. Othello rouses himself, and here, despite the dignity of the acting, there is a touch of grotesque, the incongruous, a fatal hint of the homely, the household, and husband-like—and yet only in retrospect—every smile was banned during the action.

The Moor speaks his monologue kneeling—puts out the light—"and then puts out the light"—of Desdemona's life. Follows his suicide standing—the illumination retreats, leaving the tormented bed with its white-clad corpses shimmering out of the dusk and with Lodovico's final words rolling like a requiem over all—the whole unreal, phantasmal, mystically poetic.

Out of the high light of this last scene Iago, green as a viper, with glinting, metallic eyes, rears rigidly in the clutch of the mail-covered men. A phosphorescent vision and a wonderful one in this unforgettable version of "Othello."

XV

THE DRAMA ON FIRE

For a time—one exalted and thrilling hour—the flame of the Revolution changed from red to white and like some shimmering temple towered wonderfully over Germany. It drew aloft millions of eyes and hearts, sick with the nausea of Earth. It was like a gigantic altar-fire which this folk of dreamers and proletarian philosophers felt they had kindled upon the blood-blasted, cinder-smothered stone on which War had just been busily butchering his sacrifices.

Sancta Humanitas seemed triumphant over the red craziness. Something was coming out of Chaos after all. Militarism everywhere wiped from its plinths of bronze and marble! Release from the sin-stuffed Past—ah, hope that came upon them like a dream, a slinking opiate!

Universal fraternization reached or would soon reach hands across the world like the rainbow of a new dispensation—a bridge! Above it the Soviet star dartled its rose-red rays. World Revolution! A New World!

Then came the Great Disillusion—for one thing the unbudging wall of the continued Hunger Blockade. The mandibles and tentacles of the Past, the Old World, the Old System, embedded themselves in this stuff of altruistic dreams. Party strife yelped—a nine-headed Cerberus.

The only reflection of the White Fire was that playing upon millions of bayonets—seas of steel upon all horizons. Then came Versailles, the fall of the curtain, the fall of the ax. Then the flame sank, the flame stank—guttered. . . . Now only a few sparks are left. But a single spark suffices, as we know, to— —

We mourn the green, unfulfilled genius that went down in the war. But I for one mourn the genius that was fed by this afflatus, this vision of humanity redeemed—genius that was whipped for one brief nuptial flight with Death into productive, high-keyed ecstasy by this mirage upon the desert of Europe, then tossed crashing into the limbo of hopelessness, sterility, silence.

Many of these may have been airy talents, though they have left work heavy with the lava of the moment. The greatest of them all has happily been preserved from the fate of absorp-

tion by the implacable afterwardness of things, though it has taken prison walls to do it. This is Ernst Toller, student, proletarian poet and dramatist—the most dominant and flagrant genius hatched by the German Revolution.

Toller was in fact an actor, a leader in it. And he was of the most dangerous type—an aggressive thinker, an inspired poet, a headlong youth carrying his heart in his hand now as a torch, now as a trumpet. To-day at the yeasty age of thirty, he is a prisoner in the Bavarian fortress of Niederschönenfeld for his part in the Bavarian Communist Revolt of 1919. His gift of dramatic creation may be said to have saved him from the twelve bullets of the firing squad—unusual, yet in this instance, characteristic concession on the part of the art-adoring Bavarian monarchists.

Toller's first play was called "*Wandlung*" ("Transformation"), in six stations of the *via crucis* of war. He was himself the hero, and led us into the external and internal hells and horrors he underwent from the first day of the red overture of war to his own "transmogrification." Scenes never before risked upon a stage were presented as matters of course in this torrential play. Thus in the *Vorspiel*, foreplay, so to speak, the

War Death (in steel helmet and military gear) and the Civilian Death (in top hat and gaiters) meet on a vast field of graves—to strike a balance in their business. The War Death calls his victims, officers and men, out of their graves and commands a parade—a scene of immense *macabre* power.

The play closes with the demolition of a statue upon which the hero has been working—"Our Victorious Nation," a symbolic act which reveals at one blow the anti-national urge of the German intellectual proletariat. There is a Christlike exhortation to the multitude to join hands, to destroy bastilles, but to deal gently with the erring—for the Poet-Dramatist is terrified by the Terror.

This play paved the way (with crosses, graves, prison stones, fragments of the social order) for his greater work "*Masse Mensch.*" This strange drama seizes and shakes and harrows up its audiences somewhere in Germany night after night. The play, "A visionary show," as Toller calls it, was the product of a kind of spiritual eruption. The student-poet flung it upon paper in October, 1919, in two days and a half, hiding himself in his cell like an animal, refusing food, refusing to have the cell cleaned, refusing to talk

with comrades. But he spent a whole year in giving it higher form and finish.

Ernst Toller is more than a proletariat party dramatist, sinking art in theory and political polemics. He offers his fire and brimstone in vessels shaped by art. The artist in him rejects all compromises with his æsthetic conscience. The dramatist in him sees always both sides of both sides. His passion is Humanity and he is a truculent protagonist for the rights of the Masses, but his championship is never blind; he preserves the balance necessary to create true drama. He sees the eternal human-all-too-human wrecking the very cause of humanity.

"*Masse Mensch*"—the title translates but lamely and baldly into "Mass Mankind" or "Man in the Mass" or "Herd Mankind"—is a dramatic conflict between the abstract state and the spirit of the masses. The play is divided into "pictures" and these again into "real" and "dream" pictures. The characters are nameless —Workmen, Workwomen, the Nameless One, Officer, Priest, Man, Bankers, Prisoners, Guards, Shadows. Only the heroine, Sonia Irene L., a woman of the caste of officials who makes common cause with the workers, is given a name—

significantly Russian. She is the Blue Woman embodying Love doomed to crucifixion, relentless loyalty to Truth—herself the human sacrifice.

The scenes are intensely visionary, the language lyrical, yet the dramatic seizure never loosens, but knots up the loose structure of the play into a glowing chain. This chain, like some great transmission cable, keeps racing forward, bearing the scenery and characters over profounds that seem dramatic impossibilities. Some of the scenes are merely projections of the dreams and visions of the heroine Sonia—events that enact themselves upon the stage of her own soul.

The "Mass Man" is incorporated in the "Nameless One," who appears first in this scene, then in that, revealing the face of the Mass, now as Might, now as Madness, now as God, now as Destiny, now as Guilt. The human relationship between the revolutionary Sonia and her orthodox husband, faithful to his post and to the State, is brought to bear poignantly at times. But it is secondary to the real theme and the real forces of the play. These may be summed up as Man against Man, the Mass against its confines, the Will-to-Power of the

Multitude flattering itself with a formula of Release.

The performance at the *Volksbühne* in Berlin was staged by Hans Strohbach and remains memorable for its almost naked simplicity and stark relief. The background was in many cases only an enormous dark curtain with heavy, almost cast-iron-like folds, or the opalescent distances and twilights of the *Kuppel-Horizont*. The actors were kept from being swallowed up in these gulfs of shadow by adroit cross and top lights which tore them out of the darkness and, as it were, kept them afloat on a middle plane. This world was limbo, a prison—dusk lay over all, and the fallow, corpse-like light in which mysteries or abominations breed. This light, this atmosphere, worked mightily upon the spectator who sat rigid as in a vice, between dramatic enthrallment and æsthetic wonder—as before some grim painting by Goya.

The characters were crassly realistic in their dress, bald, commonplace, negligent garb, without the slightest concession to the theatrical. But this dress, exhibited on the stage as in a show window, became eloquent, became active. These were the rough, untidy garments of the

proletariat—they spoke, they sobbed of grime and use, the dull, drab husks of prisons, real prisons and symbolic, those of the soul and of the body and of civilization.

The actors, especially those of the crowds, seemed devoid of all make-up, seemed scooped up out of some metropolitan mob slum, factory serfs with grim, hard-bitten, suffering faces, fanatic eyes, faces shining with sweat or with oil, the sweat of the machines. Their speech was feverish, hoarse, ejaculatory—the speech of men and women who were being chewed between the jaws of Crisis and Catastrophe. Only the voices of the Priest, the Officer, the Companion, intoned their lines in the serene conviction of power. The text is blank verse, rude, irregular, spasmodic, yet full of immense compressive and explosive power.

The First Picture: Sonia Irene L. in a blue, one-piece garment with the "comrades" in the rear room of a worker's tavern—a clumsy table, a bottle, a few chairs against the drapery of a ponderous curtain. Plans, consultations for the strike, the revolt. Then the challenge to her loyalty. Follows the clash with her husband, the quiet, dignified incarnation of Loyalty to the

State, coldly reproachful. She wavers, longs for him womanishly, but casts in her lot with the workers.

The Second is a Dream Picture: A blue, spasmodic light sings forth from the triangular opening between ponderous draperies, a beautiful yet sulphurous and sinister illumination. Against this in inky silhouette, a pillar or two, a stock clerk at a desk and on a chair, both unnaturally stilt-like, a suggestion of the Stock Exchange. Several harpy-like old men in cloth top hats, frock coats and spats, bark and cry. The pother of the Exchange goes up, eerie cries, bell-ringings, the monotonous, demoniacal voice of the Clerk like a *croupier* noting the bids—war stocks. "Flame-thrower Trust," "War Prayer-book Syndicate," "Poison-gas Concern," etc. The bankers like obese ghouls, crouching on a flight of steps in a dim gray cross light, and discussing the financial effects of the last offensive. The blue background shifts to red, then to green. The Woman and her Companion appear. Sonia holds out her arms and cries: "O Man, O Men!" and vanishes. Silence. Then, squeaking and gibbering, the spookish pandemonium proceeds, with the Financiers dancing round the tall desk of the Clerk.

The Third Picture: Darkness. Vague, pallid spots glimmering to the very top of the proscenium arch. An orotund chorus comes swelling into the theatre, as from vast distances:

> O we, forever wedged between
> The gulches of steep houses—
> O we delivered up
> To mechanisms of sardonic systems—
> We the visageless in nights of tears,
> We forever disparted from our mothers,
> Out of the gulfs of factories we call.
> When shall we live life?
> When shall we work at the Work?
> When shall Deliverance come?

The obscurity melts. A high pyramid of human forms and faces becomes visible, piled thickly together like a segment of an amphitheatre high above a small platform. A meeting of the workers. "Strike?" "Revolution?" Speeches, violent, brutal, demanding the imperative of force, or soft and full of pacifistic persuasiveness, go shuttling to and fro. The Crowd is lashed into pitching rapids, to wild outcries, then stricken to silent lumps of slag. "Mass is Leadership!" "Mass is Power!" "Mass is Right!" "Mass is Action!"

The Fourth Picture is again a *Traumbild*, one

of the most eerie and impressive of all. It is a phantasmagoric sketch in sanguine and bitumen of humanity's great prison. A catastrophic, evil murk. Great rocks—or are they walls?—lean top-heavily from the sides, like forbidding presences, watching. In the centre on the ground there is a bluish-greenish light, smoldering like something submarine or phosphorescent. A man with shorn head, in loose purple garb stands on a low flat box of black which contains the lantern. His attitude is grotesque and strained, an accordion hangs loose between his outstretched hands. A doleful chorus, a ribald lamentation, a kind of jail-birds' *De Profundis* resounds slowly—a grim, almost majestic choral. The concertina squeaks and belches. Shadows in prison dress arise, chains rattle—an abominable dance of wrenched joints and stiffened limbs begins. The music grows slimy and lascivious, then ponderous and plodding, then whips itself into drunkenness and fury. A Man, red as blood from head to foot, comes in.

The chorus of the Death-doomed. Prostitutes. Again the dance. Parti-colored light from above falls segmentally upon the writhing mass, like the ribs of a many-colored revolving fan, lashing them on, spinning them round,

round, round. The Blue Woman appears, her Companion, then the Husband. Guards. A metamorphosis of faces and persons. The Husband is seen standing against the wall—rifles are raised. The Blue Woman takes her place beside him. Salvos—of underearthly laughter.

The Fifth Picture brings the apex of the Revolution. A broad flight of steps, as in the hall or lobby of a public building, steps leading nowhere, cut off by curtains. Fighting in the streets—barricades. Sonia and the Nameless One. Man is slaughtering Man—Sonia's voice is uplifted in terrible protest. Scout after scout arrives with black news. The curve of feverish tension climbs steeper and steeper. Furious debates. Shots and shouts without. Suddenly an avalanche of revolutionaries in flight, men and women, drab and dingy but with blazing eyes and streaming hair, bursts into the hall and floods up the steps. They press close to one another, then turn like harried animals at bay. Salvo upon salvo without. The thunder of great doors slammed shut and barricaded. The thunder of great doors battered in. A cry: "We die together!"

With convulsed, ecstatic faces, with out-

stretched hands and heads the human pyramid thunders forth the "Internationale" with its devastating music of the "Marseillaise" plowing up and kindling every heart—a living bastion of revolt. Volleys of song answer the hammering machine-guns. The heads of soldiers appear—rifles—then a cool, spick-and-span lieutenant steel-helmeted, with drawn sword. At the Officer's command, the hands, but now outstretched in strained horizontal lines like defiant lances, lift themselves to the vertical. Sonia, the Woman in Blue, the Instigatress, is led off.

The Sixth is once more a Dream Picture. Space—crystal clear, limitless, flooded with light. In the centre a great rounded cage in a nimbus of still intenser light. Within this cage, huddled together, the figure of Sonia. Close beside the cage the Purple Companion. Now gigantic shadows climb to the zenith and lurch by in an awe-inspiring apocalyptic procession—headless shadows, victims of the Revolution, droning down accusations from the firmament. Sonia in answer supports the charges, accuses herself. The human clouds vanish, three Bankers appear, squawking quotations. A train of convicts comes and sways monotonously round the cage.

A Voice rolls out of the Infinite: "The Mass!" *The Caged One:* "God!" *An Echo:* "The Mass." *The Caged One:* "The Mass is Must. The Mass is Guiltlessness. God is Guilty." *Echo:* "Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!" *The Companion:* "God is in Thee." The Prisoners lift up their arms, like mechanisms. The stage grows dark.

The Last and Seventh Scene: a Prison Cell. A square of ground glass glimmers. The Woman in Blue at a table:

> O paths through ripening fields of wheat
> In days of August—
>
> O wanderings in wintry hills ere dawnlight broke!
> O tiny beetle in the breath of noon—
> O world! . . .

The Husband enters. Death sentence not confirmed. Forgiveness. "I warned you against the Mass. Who roots it up, roots up Hell!" A final debate, Love—Duty—Humanity—the State. Her arms burn to embrace him—he goes. Then comes the Nameless One, tempting her to flee. Again the changes are wrung upon the ever-shifting characters and countenance of the Mass.

SONIA: I would betray the Masses
Were I to claim a single human life.
The Doer can only offer up himself.
Hear then! no man must slaughter man
For thing or cause,
Unholy is the cause that urges this.
Whoso demandeth blood is Moloch.
God was Moloch.
The State was Moloch.
The Mass was Moloch.

THE NAMELESS ONE: And who—and what—is holy?

SONIA: Some time—
Communality—
The Free Folk in the Common Task united,
Free Mankind in the Common Task united.
The Task! the Folk!

The Priest stalks in—to save a soul—and bears with him the doctrine that man is evil and the dusty air of creed, commandment, civilization. The Officer comes, bearing the Death Sentence. "Orders are Orders!" The Woman in Blue goes out. Enter two female prisoners, gray, bedraggled vultures. One pounces upon the loaf of bread upon the table, the other upon

a mirror, a silk cloth. They conceal these. A volley reëchoes from the prison yard. The two she-prisoners are startled, are shaken into remorse: "Sister, what makes us do this?" They put the things back.

Sonia's bullet-riddled breast is not yet cold, yet her sacrifice has already borne good fruit. And at the close of this flaming drama two forces confront each other as before—the State is Moloch—the Mass is Moloch. But even in the symbolism of the last action in the last act, Property and the Rights of Property utter their immemorial *noli me tangere*—touch me not!

XVI

"THE MACHINE-STORMERS"

MAX REINHARDT'S huge and shambling theatre smoldered to an intenser red than the dull Pompeiian madder tint in which it had been dyed by its architect, Hans Poelzig. The playhouse grew hot from within. A volcanic drama, a feverish audience and the lightning-laden atmosphere which hung vibrating over Berlin shortly after the murder of Walther Rathenau, served to convert it into a kind of furnace. The metaphor is not forced; for apart from the dramatic, emotional and political combustibles, a furnace of iron, glaring with reverberating cherry-colored fire, burned like Baal's altar on the central stage in the last act.

All this inflammable stuff was provided by a drama called "*Die Maschinenstürmer*"—"The Machine-Stormers." It was given a ceremonial birth in this big showhouse, but it was conceived amidst much spiritual suffering in a fortress prison in Bavaria. Exposed to the fervors that

throbbed from these lines, one half expected the stalactite pendants of stucco in the great vault over the auditorium to melt and crumble. One was surprised on emerging under the stars again, to find that the proletarian agony that went forth from this limbo of want, hunger and sorrow, this mill in which human grist was ground before one's very eyes by a new Fate—the Machine—had not pierced the walls of the *Grosses Schauspielhaus* (which now appeared more or less bloodstained), and stunned the prurient pleasure-chasers in the streets.

The theme was English—the Luddite riots at Nottingham in 1816—seen through the eyes of one of the most tumultuous literary forces of the German political-literary revolution. "The Machine-Stormers," by Ernst Toller, is agitation in its most intensive dramatic-demagogic form. It is a bitter, sulphurous sermon by a proletarian on the peak to the peon-proletarian in the deeps. The *motif* and the action move back and forth with something of the implacable monotony of a pacing, puffing, screeching, clanking machine. Monotony here becomes an æsthetic danger with which the young dramatist had not reckoned; the danger that evolves when poignancy becomes too regularly reiterant, that is, mechanical. We

then react more slowly to each successive shock, more slowly and more dully.

These dingy masses of Nottingham weavers, fluttering in thin rags, poor, harried scarecrows of the slums, are like sheep marched by machinery to the Chicagoan shambles. Yet *these* sheep rebelled against the machinery because it was new and strange. This living raw material of the dawn of the nineteenth century was fed into the wheels of this latter-day play, and one saw that the problem was as ancient as human society, that there had always been endless ribbons revolving, now faster, now slower, carrying the working masses toward the great gray hoppers.

Toller is still too young to have rounded out his dramatic mastership, and the propagandist often halts the dramatist in the mid-career of the dialogue. Here and there, despite the stormy independence of the lines, we hear echoes, catch the accents of other and older men; Hauptmann in "The Weavers" (Toller risked an all-too-obvious parallel here), Georg Kaiser in his apotheosis of the mechanical; Shaw, too, but a burning and rapturous Shaw.

"The Machine-Stormers" is a monotonous yet tense threnody and epic of pain and labor. The light that streaks across it lies in the radiance

of the message which Toller gives to the mystic, half-crazed sage, Old Man Reaper, who ambles prophetically in the spirit of a Shakespearean clown through the play, seeking the solution in the Bible, and then in sudden outbursts of wrath, pointing his stick like a gun at God: "We must help one another and be kind."

The Machine descends upon the poor little world of these workers. They behold in it only the primitive dragon devouring their work, their livelihood, their lives, and spawning more misery and hunger. The children cry for bread. So there comes upon them the hot, primitive, most natural impulse to destroy the monster. Jim Cobbet, a workman with a vision widened and clarified by travel, seeks to aid the weavers by other means. He warns them of the ultimate triumph of the Machine, but is overruled and overborne and meets the fate of most saviors.

Toller, despite his passion for the proletariat, is not blind to the fact that it, too, is Moloch, and Machine.

The play demands a big canvas and so it spreads itself over the whole vast stage, fore-stage and central amphitheatre. The Prologue opens upon the gloom in the hall of the House of Lords: a gray vacuity, shafts of mote-laden light,

the white-wigged, blue-robed Chancellor lying like a corpse in a grotesque attitude in his great chair. Beside him, to left and right, there are two speakers; before them, in the murk, dimly revealed at intervals, phantom-like, bewigged members of the House of Lords.

A bill is to be voted upon: "Whosoever destroys a machine shall pay for it with his life."

Young Lord Byron, making his maiden speech, protests against the bill in fine humane heroics; Lord Castlereagh brings the spirit of power and the crushing utilitarianism of the time to bear upon the members; balloting takes place, the bill is passed, the session dissolves like smoke.

The first scene opens in a public square in Nottingham. The setting is by Herzfelde; a Gargantuan child's play-box, ramshackle, semi-expressionistic. Two scarlet gallows erected by the workers to hang "traitors" in effigy brand themselves upon the eyes of the audience. Children whimper for bread as Jim Cobbet returns, pack on back, to his native town. The ringleaders make furious harangues, the effigies are hanged after the question has been put and judgment delivered. The words are shot forth from the crowd's lips like bullets; clenched fists and bare arms are thrust out above the sea of tousled

heads. Cobbet speaks and is hailed as a prophet and leader—to the discomfiture of the deposed mob-masters, above all, Ned Ludd, the furious and fanatic leader who has given his name to this historic revolt.

Then one sees the hovels of the weavers; torn, gaping shells of attics behind the triangles of cheerless crumbling gables; whimpering children; wailing women, men, mute or cursing.

Old Reaper wildly consults his ponderous Bible, chatters, and challenges God with his staff as with a rifle, through the rents in the roof.

Through some symbolic fancy on the part of Toller, the faces of Lord Byron and Lord Castlereagh are repeated in the faces of Jim Cobbet and Mr. Ure, the manufacturer.

The struggle between the Mass and the Machine is paralleled by the struggle between Jim Cobbet and Ure, between Jim Cobbet and his brother Henry Cobbet, Ure's manager, between Jim Cobbet and his utilitarian mother, and between Jim Cobbet and his fellow-weavers.

The Machine, though an ever-present, immanent threat, remains hidden. Only in the last scene does it emerge—overwhelmingly!

A most striking stage picture was furnished by Ure's villa. This was a pompous, glaring man-

sion in blood-red brick and white marble, with grotesque, square-cut trees and hedges, fantastic hollyhocks, flaring steps and porch, all cut off from the street by a forbidding iron fence which presented its barbed rods like so many javelins held "at attention." The mob of weavers' wives assembles before this fortress of profit and respectability, like a bank of smoke.

Mary, the fair-haired wife of one of the weavers, is seen slinking from the mansion. Ha! Henry Cobbet's light-o'-love, selling herself for food! There is swift justice upon her at the hands of the furious women. Old Man Reaper reaches wonderful heights in his heart-racking apostrophes to God.

Then Henry Cobbet appears upon the steps, and harangues the women. Words and cries volley back and forth: "We want bread!" An emotional storm sweeps down upon us from this scene. In its violent strophe and antistrophe; in the isolation of the one figure; in the invisible presence of law and order; in the visible, spiked iron equator that separates two worlds; and in the visible ramparts of class and privilege; in the toil-worn, rebellious apparitions from the deeps, eaten by hunger and full of fear and hatred of the new Frankenstein creature, there is something

of the stature of Shakespeare or Æschylus.

The last picture is one of the most grandiose ever built up on the modern stage. It is the birth, the apotheosis of the Mechanistic Age. We are confronted by, almost sucked into, the interior of the enormous Machine Hall. It is vaulted like an observatory; great, curved, latticed openings are visible in the dimness of the cupola, with the leaden firmament of Nottingham glowering through.

Under this basks the Machine, the primitive engine of 1816, triumphant, bright, against the gloom of the background; a living mechanism, bathed in shimmering light, radiant in green, scarlet and bedecked with brazen bands and belts. It has ponderous upright boilers, a walking-beam, a tremendous red flywheel, ladders and galleries for the engineer, a substructure of brick, and furnace doors red and roaring with flame. Smoke pours from the stack, drifts of steam lie stratawise across engine and stage—like clouds across El Capitan in the Yosemite Valley.

The Machine hums and pants, clanks and throbs, thumping rhythmically. Now and again the hand of the officiating priest—that is, the Engineer—pulls a long cord and unlooses the hoarse, reverberating organ note of the siren.

The looms rattle and click to right and left. Little children are sitting before the beams, like galley slaves at the oars.

Below this engine terrace the Weavers gather like a thunder cloud, men and women led on by Ned Ludd and his adjutants. In vain Jim Cobbet confronts them, and exhorts them to reason, bidding them remember that the new monster must be mastered, not destroyed. "The tyrant Machine, conquered by the spirit of creative man, will become your tool, your servant."

He is shouted at, then struck down; Ludd triumphs. The crowd, with hammers, clubs and crowbars, storms forward over him. The Machine is attacked, battered, broken. The great flywheel stops, the steam siren groans like the voice of a wounded thing. The engineer flies to his gallery and goes mad, grows wildly prophetical—touched with a vision of the future. He pours forth, as from a pulpit, ecstatic, semi-biblical eloquence upon the wreckers, punctuating his periods by the bourdon note of the steam whistle.

Jim Cobbet dies, his face and brow are marble, like those of the dying Byron, and his last words are full of mingled love and bitterness: "You

will follow only the man who whips you into liberation!"

Then the mechanism of the State comes to protect the mechanism of industry. Soldiers file in; the short, sharp bark of military commands is more than all oratory; the mechanism of the rifle is master over the mechanism of mere muscle.

The problem of Man and the Machine and the Master of the Machine is not solved in this play pitched in the industrial England of 1816, for it is not solved even to-day. Perhaps there are feasible solutions, economic, sociological, political.

But at present one sees only that embodied in the words of Old Man Reaper, moaning over the dead body of Jim Cobbet, charging God with all the incongruity of the world and hysterically crying forth his refrain:

"We must help one another and be kind."

XVII

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SPIRIT

The Will to Significance—by this term might one define the flow and direction of the various intellectual forces which have been unloosed in the New Germany. The *nonsens* of the war, the tempests which swooped down upon the structure of civilization, the collapse of thousands of presumably safe, inviolable and enduring concepts and values, have reared up a Golgotha of ruin and suffering before all men's eyes. And this Mount of Punishment is crowned, Vesuvius-like, with smoke and flame. A volcano? It lifts itself as a fiery symbol in the dust-smothered heavens and from its open mouth floats up an enormous burning point of interrogation. It suggests a thousand similes. It glows and smolders like a sickle, or a scimitar, a curved Damoclean sword demanding answers to innumerable enigmas—a flaming glaive held before the portals of that future Paradise whose augury to man is Peace and Contentment. But the planet is sick,

sick with man, and no panacea has yet been found. Nevertheless, search is being made.

Among these forces which are striving to establish a new Order in a new Cosmos, Count Hermann Keyserling and his School of Wisdom at Darmstadt must be accounted as one of the most potent and important. In the course of a few years this dynamic personality, this Philosopher of the Present, a kind of blond and middle-aged Faust out of the Baltic borderlands, has succeeded in establishing a modern and secular Glastonbury in which, himself administering as High Priest, he uplifts the Grail of a new human dispensation. A firm and luminous nucleus has been established in the pretty Hessian capital, there is a novitiate of faithful pupils and disciples and a loyal following among well-known modern intellectuals in Germany and the adjoining lands, a monument of solid and constructive philosophical works and inspirational pamphlets—such are a few of the achievements of this remarkable man of thought and action. At the recent session of the School for Free Philosophy at Darmstadt, members came from all parts of Germany and from foreign lands, and they came with something of the spirit of devotion characterizing pilgrims. Brooding over the whole we find, as in an afterglow of the

Augustan or Weimarian tradition, the patronage, practical assistance and close personal interest of Ernst Ludwig, the former Grand Duke of Hessen.

What is this new Cosmos toward which Keyserling strives? What vital message or new synthesis does he bring us? What spiritual achievements are there to justify this apparently presumptuous and almost self-contradictory title—"The School of Wisdom?" Does this Philosopher also presume to be a Prophet? A Savior? Out of what balsams or poisons are his panaceas made? The pontifical authority which he has usurped and which he exercises within the confines of his school—this czardom of the spirit that would eliminate all dispute and debate—upon what altruistic or egocentric urges is it based?

Mixed with the choruses of admiration, the strivings of emulation, there are sharp and cynical voices raised against the man who has made, as they aver, a cult of self-aggrandisement and self-deification out of his philosophy. It is also quite in keeping with the spirit of German particularism and German intellectual strife that a keen and acrid antagonism should have broken out between Count Keyserling and Dr. Rudolf Steiner, the active founder and prophet of the

Triune State, which has its lay temples, its patrons, followers, schools and official organs.

In "What We Need!—What I am Striving For," one of his small, characteristically black and yellow pamphlets, all of which bear, typographically, a tasteful and individualistic stamp, Count Keyserling has laid down his fundamental principles, ideals and plan of action. Keyserling believes that our occidental culture can be preserved from that fate which Oswald Spengler has prophesied for it in such sombre and apocalyptic colors, only by the ascendancy of wisdom over knowledge. This truth is not, to be sure, a new discovery, but it is a truth which in an age like ours must be constantly rediscovered and reaffirmed.

In "The Way to Perfection," Keyserling demanded a centre for this new mission and outlined a definite plan. This at once brought forth a response. The "Society for Free Philosophy" was founded, and founded upon a practical basis. The Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig of Hessen made liberal donations and provided quarters for the Society and the School. Within the compass of these and through the medium of his various books, Keyserling has developed an intensive form of exhortation and instruction, striving

steadily toward the realization of the goal of his life: the reconciliation between intellect and soul, the remarriage between them, the metabolism between the content and the form of life, the education and systematic training to a life conditioned by apperception in its higher and highest forms.

This School of Wisdom has no fast and firm curriculum, for it is based upon the ideal of "Being," rather than upon the ideal of "Being able to do." Personality transcends ability—approaching in this the Goethean postulate that the supreme felicity of man is personality. "Full value human beings (*Vollmenschen*) are to be fashioned out of fragmentary modernities, men capable of leadership out of the undecided of will, the wise or sage-like man out of those crammed with theoretical knowledge." The program sounds audacious and utopian.

"The eternal basic accord in every man's heart is to be struck into any melody that may be desired—nothing is to be taken from him, but only added unto him." Each man is to be furthered in accordance with his own intrinsic nature, each is to find the path unto himself, to the formation of the personal Self.

Keyserling recognizes the fact that such an

intensive cultivation of the human spirit and personality can be attained only by personal influence—as within the walls or porches of Plato's Academy, or the Oriental schools of wisdom where living contact means so much. This method is to be followed in this modern school —the educational objective is: "the polarization of personalities." A certain cloistral seclusion is therefore necessary, though once a year there is a Congress of all those interested in the School and the Society. These comprise the Communalty of the Patrons, the Communalty of the Scholars, the Communalty of the Intellectually Related. The official organ of the Society and School is called "*Der Leuchter*" ("The Candelabrum") and this, varied in many interesting forms by different artists, is also the symbol of the publishing house of Otto Reichl, which issues Keyserling's books and those of his followers. In addition there are personal communications of the Count's and pertinent articles by the leaders of the school published from time to time under the title "*Der Weg zur Vollendung.*"

During the recent sojourn of Rabindranath Tagore in Germany and the astonishing furore he created with the most unteutonic thinness of

his thought, a kind of spiritual affiliation was established with this emissary of the spirit of the East, and a regular exchange of philosophical values arranged. But the diluted and transparent generalizations upon the themes of Love, Humanity and Eternity which characterize the Indian poet and teacher, stand in sharp contrast with the bulk of Keyserling's thought which is pregnant with earth-experience, fresh summaries and new ideas. Keyserling's efforts are directed against the sabotage of the spiritual-intellectual treasury which mankind has slowly erected in its own honor, and against all attempts to prevent its being extended laterally and vertically. In his "What We Need!—What I am Striving For," he writes:

"Until this truth once more become dominant: that something else than intellect and the fabrics of intellect condition the forms of life—that it is the fixed character of the soul which decrees and determines these—we need hope for no improvement in our condition. The terrible fallacy of this Age—to compress it into a single phrase—was this: that that Freedom which intellect rightly demands, that Freedom which was one of the fairest achievements of the dying 18th century, should have been added as a mere veneer to the spiritual life of our day. The error lay in not recognizing that the essential freedom of man, if it is to be expressed in the

spiritual medium at all, calls for conditions which are quite different—that only the organized and not the amorphous soul can be free."

"A new synthesis of intellect and spirit has become necessary. A synthesis which is directed toward establishing a new balance of the various parts of man, not with the backward, but with the most highly-developed elements."

Interesting is Keyserling's analysis of the state of the modern German soul and his reason for his belief that the new synthesis will be first discovered in Germany. The German suffers from the "irreality" of his spirit. Thought in application to Life is remote to him—and no man more than he exemplifies the Schopenhauerian dictum that the "Intellect is the parasite of the Will." He finds it difficult to relate Thinking and Being—and loses himself, now in impracticability, now in ideologies, now in crass materialism—always the victim of his slow, undifferentiated soul. But it is precisely this spiritual need and its recognition which causes the cry for the new synthesis to resound loudest of all in Germany. Nowhere else is the insufficiency, the imperfection of the present mentality of mankind more clearly, more poignantly recognized than here. The German thought of lib-

eration, the German *Gottessuchen* or search for God, the newer, unscholastic German philosophy and the German *Jugendbewegung*, or Movement of Youth, are in this sense but one single cry of longing. And since all things great are born of longing—for only he that seeks shall find, and only he that hath not shall achieve, and only he who is not already at the goal is conscious of the problems that encumber the path toward it—it follows that Germany with this great objective in view and the distance that separates her from it ever before her eyes, is to be regarded as the soil upon which the New Synthesis will most likely spring to birth.

It is Philosophy and not Religion which Keyserling declares must solve and heal our modern ills and problems. But not Philosophy in the sense of a dry science or intellectual sport—its real essence lies in the fulfillment of Science in the synthesis of Wisdom.

It is remarkable, declares the Philosopher of Darmstadt, that it is precisely Socrates, condemned by the Athenians as a corrupter of youth, who has been elevated to the rank of a prototype of all occidental philosophy—with the result that the concept of the Sage—that is, the One Who Knows, in contradistinction to the

Truth Seeker—never obtained a foothold in Europe, as was the case in India. Wisdom, in short, has never been the conscious goal of European effort. The evolutionary goal of the philosopher lies in his ascent to the plane of the Sage. And Philosophy must be life in the form of Knowledge. A new type of Man must be postulated, the highest expression of which is the Wise Man and not the Learned Man, and this ideal must be concentrated and focused in institutions which are based upon the culture of Being and not, as already set forth, of merely "Being able to do."

In response to an invitation to attend the recent annual session of the "School of Wisdom," I betook myself to Darmstadt. The session was inaugurated with a social evening during which the visitors were met and greeted by Count Keyserling, the Grand Duke of Hessen, Count Hardenberg, and a number of intellectuals. The assemblage was the usual gathering of German types of the middle and upper intellectual classes, rather drab and showing the wear and tear of the war in subdued wardrobes. Here and there were poetic-scholarly, even a few theatrical faces, types of the intensive thinker, one or two Whitmanian *Naturmenschen* with long

locks, open Byronic (Schiller) collars, teachers, literary men and women, a sprinkling of aristocrats, mostly in street garb—a few in evening dress. The faces were, on the whole, undistinguished and bourgeois, though revealing great capacity and efficiency. This point is worthy of mention, because Count Keyserling lays a proper weight upon externals and upon cosmopolitan dress and manners and does not underrate the psychological effects of polished forms of intercourse.

This super-Chautauqua took place in an old-fashioned dance and concert hall decorated with palms and flowers. The lecture rostrum was set in a high leafy bower against a huge arched window through which streamed a flood of blinding light into the eyes of the audience, leaving the speaker outlined with nebulous face against this glare. This showed a certain lack of adroit stage management and ceremonial. This intrusion of harsh daylight into the inner world of thought and harmony was, however, soon subdued by the erection of a great screen through which a glow of mellow light was shed over the interior. The addresses and lectures took place at ten in the morning and at four in the afternoon.

Count Keyserling himself, a tall man, with an

open, genial face, thin fair-gray hair irradiating his finely modeled head, and a moustache and goatee giving emphasis to his face, opened the session with a lecture upon "Tension and Rhythm." The Universe was a complex of these forces and movements, and all nature was progressing toward a balanced and equalized harmony. This law of rhythm and tension, translated into religious, ethical and intellectual terms such as the Orient, the Occident, the Catholic Church, Bolshevism, and the like, brought forth the phenomena of civilization, the present antagonism between East and West, between Capital and Labor, between Democracy and Autocracy. Every eccentric movement was the beginning of a new concentric movement. The ideal of life was not to be sought in the abolition of antagonisms. Love thy enemy, *but as an enemy.*

This founder and leader of the "School of Wisdom" won his first crown of fame through his remarkable book, "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher" (*Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*). It appeared shortly after the war and its effect upon intellectual and literary Germany and upon many of the neighboring countries which are galvanized by the major intellectual forces of Germany, was tremendous. It was

hailed as a kind of new revelation, a lay Bible for the reorientation of the modern spirit, a work packed with intensive potentialities of constructive, subversive, reformative thought. Leaving his family seat of Rayküll in Esthonia, Keyserling, anxious to shake off the rust of the recluse, went on a voyage around the world. He wished to let its great pageant play upon his mind and soul once more. The result was this remarkable work in two volumes, a work unique, full of conclusive yet searching thought, of perfected form and self-questioning, of love of beauty and of freedom from the gravitation and duskiness of the schoolbound philosopher. In this book the world, revolving about a dominant personality along an equatorial travel-line which intersected Africa, Asia, Japan, the South Sea Islands and North America from West to East, is held up as a spinning crystal. Through this all life and history pass as in a vivid procession to the music of a clear and exact yet delicate commentary of critical thought. And then, this modern, perambulant Montaigne, subtle, many-sided, universal, returns to his country seat, in the firm conviction that the way around the world was after all, the shortest way to himself. The "Travel Diary" is a world in itself, or rather three—the material,

the intellectual, the metaphysical. It pulsates with living thought, with lightning-like and intuitive seizures of truth. A deep yet serene music goes through it and it has much of the inevitability of form and content of an inspired work of art.

Keyserling's other books, so far as their influence goes, revolve as planets about this central sun of his transfigured "Diary." "The Framework of the World" is a youthful but brilliant attempt to set up a new system of critical philosophy—an abstract world realized with an artistic, at times almost dramatic, power. In "Immortality," another work of his, Keyserling, in his capacity as a naturalist, illuminates the unfathomable problem of life and death critically from the viewpoint of the relation between natural phenomena and the world of human imagining. It is Continuity which, as in a wave and its progress, gives life and men immortality, but "all Philosophy ends with Resignation before the gates of the Inscrutable, and in Awe before the Mystery."

In his book, "Philosophy as Art," Keyserling sets up the thesis that Philosophy is not a Science, but an Art, and gives us an insight into the deepest fundaments of his thought and his work, the

realization of self, and the gradual ascent to a clarified apperception. It is a splendid spiritual gesture, a bold act meant to recover for philosophy its ancient meaning and authority—the living love of Wisdom. Another work which many hold to be Count Keyserling's most important and significant, is "A Prologomena to Natural Philosophy." It proceeds from Kantian postulates, and strives to develop and extend these in accordance with the fruits of modern research. The Kantian world, according to Keyserling, had been made arid by the professional Kantians who preached and interpreted the letter and not the spirit of the Sage. The "Prologomena" is a book which, in spite of its philosophical terminology and sheer reasoning, is full of great and harmonious rhythms of creative thought. Here we have inspired metaphysics and not labored critical science applied to the stating, the analysis and the comprehension of the riddles of life.

Keyserling's latest work was published in the autumn of 1922 and is entitled "Creative Knowledge" (*Schöpferische Erkenntnis*). It is a "wedge-shaped," rhythmical work which, while reiterating many of the earlier thoughts and ideals of the philosopher, is directed toward extending their empire and significance as embodied

in the "School of Wisdom," and in the personal influence of its founder and leader. Keyserling has become aware of his growing power, of the penetration of his thought into the fabric of the times, of his fecundation of many minds that have in turn become fruitful, of his increasing army of loyal followers and disciples, of the extension of the frontiers of his spiritual realm. His language, especially in his "Foreword," takes on a tone of calm and conscious authority; it is the tone and attitude of the Sage, Prophet and Master—the philosopher has become aware of his place, and the pontifical comes of itself. In this "Foreword" he writes:

"It is not my intention to erect in this book a complete and insulated structure of theoretical teaching, but to give forth living impulses. I do not wish to present my readers with a picture of this or that, but to transform them. And I wish to transform them into human beings who contemplate the world independently from a higher outlook and who live on a higher plane than heretofore. But this is conditioned by the fact as to whether my word has become flesh to them, or not. The whole peculiar rhythm of 'Creative Knowledge' is directed toward the inauguration of this process."

Running through the fabric of the Keyserlingian philosophy we find again and again echoes

and approaches which reveal a certain affinity with the more subtle aspects and depths of American Pragmatism and New Thought, though in his chapters upon America (in the "Diary"), he utters severe judgments upon the materialism of this country, and its pseudo-religious phenomena. Within the shadowy cathedral aisles of the Big Trees in the Mariposa Grove in California, he is full of hushed reverence and the future of America appears to him in a great vision upon the background of the primitive Golden Past, transported here into the present.

Keyserling's personal teaching of his pupils and disciples is based upon a kind of *exercitium* in the manner of the Jesuits, upon seclusion, meditation, going-into-oneself. Always, he declared to me, his scholars came to him with the question: "What should one do?" And to all of them he restated the question in this form: "What should *I* do?" For the concept "one" is always the secondary result of the sum of individuals and of individual decisions, and so "one" can become profitable only through the fact that the majority of the personalities in question have chosen that path which in every instance and upon all occasions happened to be that which best suited their peculiarities. There is no primary

"one." Those who judge and act from the viewpoint of "one," deliver themselves up to preconceived abstractions and thereby lose contact with their creative selves.

Thus, in spite of the affiliations of "The School of Wisdom" with the Eastern philosophies, we find an intensification of the personal Ego, an occidental apotheosis of the individual instead of the oriental submergence in the All. It is not even submergence in his school or its precepts which Keyserling demands or preaches, but simply voluntary subjection to the master or guiding mind until the personal world has developed itself in strength and fullness. "Creative Knowledge" is not only the latest, but also the most provocative and inspired book which Count Keyserling has written—it is packed with pith and stimulus, and even the textual titles at the top of every page are like the concentrated and long-studied names of books. We are confronted by a clear profundity and astuteness to which we must undoubtedly give the name of wisdom, both inborn and acquired and reinforced by experience. There is also an intuitive laying-bare of the secret springs of human and national action which gives Keyserling the additional dignity of a clairvoyant political personality. His

political capacities have, moreover, been made clear through a number of brilliant pamphlets upon politics, government and economics which he has published.

What is Count Keyserling's goal and that of his school? It may, perhaps be best expressed in the concluding words of his latest and most dynamic book. Under the heading "The New Basic Tone of Life," he writes:

"That which may and should come to pass to-day is not reëstablishment of religion upon its original plane, *but the elevation, the enthronement of all forms of life upon that plane formerly occupied by religion.* Here indeed is the goal. Philosophy, politics, practical action must henceforth be given the same deep background hitherto possessed only by Religion.

"So far, so good. Yet there are those who might object: 'You direct us earthward. You yourself have said that the Empire of the Wise is utterly of this world. How can we then reconcile this with the ultimate yearning of the Soul?' Let me answer this with a few concluding words which embody my personal confession of faith. I shall be brief because all discursiveness concerning ultimate things tends to violate their essentials. Again and again have I pointed out that 'Heaven' can only be realized in that it realizes itself on earth. Its realization in our midst signifies at once its own spiritual dimension and destiny.

"But there is a still more pertinent reason why the way which I point out to men leads toward the Earth and not toward Heaven: it is necessary that the tasks of this Earth be fulfilled and fulfilled completely, *because here alone is freedom to be found.* In all that lies 'Beyond,' freedom and destiny lapse into one, and the concept of Freedom becomes meaningless. In consequence there is no longer any possibility of any voluntary higher development there. There we merely see the effects of beginnings made here. Hence there is truth in the Indian teaching that the gods must be born as men in order to grow beyond their godhead. Hence Christianity and Islam are no doubt right in affirming that *this* life finally decides. He who fulfills the temporal task and fulfills it completely—he alone extends his influence through time—to Eternity."

Count Keyserling may be but a prophet untested by time, may be but one of many prophets crying forth messages new and old, in the sorry wilderness of the Age. But he is not a mere peddler or virtuoso in philosophy, but one who is attempting to *build* in the wilderness. In this, too, and not only in the validity of his ideas and the vitality of his philosophy, lies the great significance of this spiritual enterprise in an unspiritual age. Here in this open, deliberate and organized avowal that the meditation of the soul, the purest and freest flights of the human mind,

shall still be dominant forces and factors in the life of modern man, there is something almost sublime. This something will determine its own form, and this form its own force, time and fecundity.

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